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JUNE 1954

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OF MICHIGAN

ELIE KEDOURIE

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COLONEL LAWRENCE

ELIE KEDOURIE

On the threshold of the contemporary Middle East stands the figure of T. E. Lawrence, an object at once of awe and pity. He is a portent, a symbol of the power of Chance over human affairs, and of the constant irruption into history of the uncontrollable force of a demonic will exerting itself to the limit of endurance. The consequences of his actions have touched numberless lives, and yet their motives were strictly personal, to be sought only in his intimate restlessness and private torment. The poverty of his ideas matches only the passion with which he pursued their realization. And the cruel irony of his fate is that, though he was intent chiefly on the salvation of the soul of T. E. Lawrence, a private person, it is as Colonel Lawrence, a public legend, engaged in a dubious adventure, that he may claim to survive in men's memories. And he needs must, further to embitter the irony, following his own principles and convictions, acquiesce in such a fate. For he was both a liberal and a romantic. As a liberal, he was blithely unconscious of the gulf that must yawn between thought and action, of the fatal change which comes over thought when flesh and blood enact its consequences; and as a romantic, he believed that the Kingdom of God can be taken by storm, and that political action is a passport to eternal salvation.

But such as he is, he must stand as a sign of our ultimate confusion. For of him we can know nothing that is worth knowing, neither the force that drove him nor the vision that he sought. In the bleak extreme of human experience where we try to follow him, what he can show us most clearly is the mystery of existence, the unknowability of motive and the solitariness of the will. To console our ignorance we may scrutinize his books, interrogate his actions, and seek the far-reaching consequences of his fortuitous, momentary and fulgurant passage in the East. What is open to us is a game of consequences and no more: he came, he saw, he acted and he went away. His actions and their consequences are entangled and entwined with the accidents of a long war, with obscure negotiations, equivocal intentions, and ambiguous second thoughts, with the shifts of bewildered officials, and the contrivances of tired politicians, and with the designs of ambitious and unscrupulous men. To disentangle and elucidate them is a patient search, and a long inquiry. But what is possible in a short compass is to examine the apology he insisted on offering to the world and to test the logic of his legend, the legend he fashioned and in the toils of which he himself was, perhaps, in the end, imprisoned.

On his coming we need not perhaps dwell, for what is there to say of a young man from Oxford, adventurous and confident, who goes out to the Levant to dig and make discoveries? Nothing save that it was fated so to happen. It is more profitable to ascertain what he saw, and with what eyes he looked upon the alien world in which he found himself.

Lawrence experienced no doubts or misgivings when confronted with the spectacle of the Ottoman Empire in its last days. He could resolve the complexity of its fate with a simple doctrine, and render judgment on it with categorical finality. 'Turkey was dying of over-strain', he wrote at the beginning of *The Seven Pillars*, 'of the attempt with diminished resources to hold, on traditional terms, the whole empire bequeathed to it'; 'Turkey was decaying; and only the knife might keep health in her'; 'Turkey was rotten'.¹ Such was his summation, while taking stock at the close of his adventure, but also such exactly was his premise at its start. 'Poor old Turkey is only hanging together . . . Everything about her is very very sick, and almost I think it will be good to make an end of her, though it will be very inconvenient to ourselves . . .'² These opinions occur in a letter to D. G. Hogarth of April 1915. They were by no means original; they were on the contrary, quite current in England in the years before 1914. It is not surprising that Lawrence should have held them, but what is worth noting is the precise source from which he acquired them, and how he transformed them from the subtle, tentative instrument of exploration which they were, to blunt, sweeping dogmas, the engines of his haste and violence.

'Not a wild man, but *Mentor* to all of us was Hogarth, our father confessor and adviser, who brought us the parallels of history, and moderation, and courage . . . Hogarth was our referee, and our untiring historian, who gave us his great knowledge and careful wisdom even in the smallest things . . .'³ D. G. Hogarth,⁴ of whom Lawrence writes in this manner, was one of the very few who stood close to him. Their relation lasted from Lawrence's undergraduate days at Oxford until Hogarth's death in 1927. They were associated together in archaeological enterprise before 1914 and in the management and control of the Sharifian adventure during the war. After the war, perhaps out of pride in the achievement of his erstwhile *protégé*, and no doubt from the partiality of affection, Hogarth lent his authority to the defence of the Sharifian cause, the service of

¹ *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 1940 ed. (hereafter referred to as S.P.), pp. 54 and 56.

² D. Garnett, ed., *Letters of T. E. Lawrence*, p. 197.

³ S.P., pp. 57-8.

⁴ David George Hogarth (1862-1927), scholar and archaeologist. Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. Director of the Arab Bureau, Cairo, 1916.

which was, for a few years after 1918, Lawrence's passion and obsession. Lawrence himself testifies, it has been seen, to Hogarth's intellectual influence over the circle of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, and Lawrence's writings also testify to the same influence. Not that Hogarth had a clear-cut doctrine about the modern East. It was not his field, and his interests lay rather in archaeology and the remoter past. But his intellect was fine and subtle, and he was curious of the world around him. His historical imagination could not help playing over it with theories and interpretations, sensitive, hesitant, perhaps contradictory, perhaps untenable. What they all amounted to was no more than an attitude of mind, what they indicated was a temper of thought, what they perhaps expressed was a scale of preferences; but the younger men who surrounded him in Cairo, of whom Lawrence had been under his influence longest, took up his suppositions to use them as guides in the action in which they were engaged.

Hogarth shared the prevalent view that the Ottoman Empire was doomed. In his first days in the East, in the 1890s, he thought that only a European occupation could provide a remedy:

Verily Anatolia is one of the gardens of the temperate earth, and perhaps some day European colonists may return from the lands of fever and fly, where their second generation hardly holds its own and the third fails, to take up this portion of their more legitimate heritage.

Who else can arrest the Anatolian death? Not the Ottoman rejuvenated by any political alchemy. His organs are wasted too far to be saved by any 'reforms'.¹

His explanation, however, of Ottoman decline is curiously inconsistent; and the interest and originality of his opinions lie in this very inconsistency. He advances, on the one hand, the usual Liberal theory about the unspeakable Ottoman, unfit to rule Turkish peasants, much less an empire.

Travellers who assert that they 'like the Turk' mean such a 'Turk' as this Anatolian peasant. One is bound to like him if only for his courage and simplicity, and his blind fidelity and his loyalty. Those villagers who fought so stubbornly at Plevna and Shipka never received a piastre, but, though they spit at the name of Osman . . . and invoke Allah's curse on Suleiman . . . they say never a word against the Padishah . . . These 'Turks' are honest, too, able, unlike the Arab, to withstand long temptation of gold, and gentlemen full of simple consideration for a traveller and just instinct of his needs.²

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ottoman rulers had

¹ *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant*, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

tried to mend their ways by adopting measures of European reform. In an essay on *Turkey*, published in 1915, which, together with a remarkable paper contributed to *The Arab Bulletin*, in April 1917, contains the bulk of his reflections on the Ottoman Empire and on Eastern politics, he describes the achievements of Sultan Mahmud II in whose reign measures of reform were given great impetus; this achievement

was nothing less than the elimination of the most Byzantine features in its constitution and government. The substitution of national forces for mercenary praetorians: the substitution of direct imperial government of the provinces for devolution to seigneurs, tribal chiefs, and irresponsible officers: the substitution of direct collection for tax-farming: and the substitution of administration by bureaucrats for administration by household officers — these, the chief reforms carried through under Mahmud, were all anti-Byzantine. They did not cause the Osmanli state to be born anew, but, at least, they went far to purge it of official sin.¹

Under Mahmud's successors, however, the achievements of reform were lost and the Ottoman Empire, little by little, relapsed into its original state:

Despite the good intentions of Abdul Aziz himself . . . and despite more than one minister of outstanding ability, reform and almost everything else in the Empire went to the bad in this unhappy reign. The administration settled down to lifeless routine and lapsed into corruption: the national army was starved: the depreciation of the currency grew worse as the revenue declined and the Sultan's household and personal extravagance increased.²

Under Abdul Hamid, the situation worsened:

Internally, the Empire passed more and more under the government of the imperial household . . . Ministers irresponsible; officials without sense of public obligation; venality in all ranks; universal suspicion and delation; violent remedies, such as the Armenian massacres of 1894 . . .; the peasantry . . . forced ultimately to liquidate all accounts; impoverishment of the whole empire by the improvidence and oppression of the central power — such phrasing of the conventional results of 'Palace' government expresses inadequately the fruits of Yildiz under Abdul Hamid II.³

¹ D. G. Hogarth, 'Turkey' in *The Balkans*, by N. Forbes, A. J. Toynbee, D. Mitrany, D. G. Hogarth, 1915, pp. 347-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 357. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

This orthodox theory of the essential wickedness and unfitness of the rulers of the Ottoman Empire is most strikingly expressed in a comment of 1917 in which Hogarth gives his reaction to a Turkish overture for a peace which might preserve, in some fashion, the structure of the Ottoman Empire. 'We are not converted. It would take a good deal more than this interested argument,' writes Hogarth 'to convince us of the necessity of ensuing no better end than the exchange of one set of Turks for, another in the Arab provinces — opposition for Government or Majority for Minority C.U.P. The Young Turk, as men say, is the son of the Old Turk, and the Old is the father of the Young. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*'

Side by side with the doctrine that the Ottoman Empire is being destroyed through failure to reform itself, Hogarth suggested another to account for the state of affairs which he observed. But this second doctrine contradicted the first, and was, moreover, a rare one for a European to hold in Hogarth's time. This doctrine held that the Ottoman Empire was perishing not from the failure to reform on European lines, but from the attempt precisely to do so. Hogarth maintained this alternative view in his writings together with the first. 'He was', says Philby of him, 'far too acute to gloss over inconvenient facts':¹ this is exactly what makes the reading of his far too few writings on the modern East so exciting. He was perhaps too sensitive, too observant of the incongruous fact that will not fit into a historical dogma, to acquiesce with comfort in the theory about the Ottoman Empire current in his day which his Liberal instincts inclined him to believe. So he ventured on another explanation of Ottoman decline. 'The only form of government understood in the Ottoman East is immediate, personal government. The introduction of an official system,' he wrote in his *Wandering Scholar*, 'merely results in the multiplication of personal governors'; 'Centralization', he observed, 'is slow death in such an Empire as the Ottoman whose nervous system of wires and roads is not half-developed, whose brain cannot adequately direct the members. In this heterogeneous loose-knit state such a feudal system as the rule of the *aghás* a century ago is perhaps best. The feudal lords at least were sensitive to the condition of the peasantry and were punished directly by their disorders'; he therefore thought 'that the Oriental . . . is probably happiest under a mildly "corrupt" and "oppressive" Government'; he explained why European reforms had to fail in the Ottoman Empire: 'The forms of a civilization based on the equality of all men before the law have been imposed on men who, by religion and custom immemorial, respect persons. A system, presupposing development and progressive adaptation, is entrusted to a people who regard human initiative in change as an insult to the Creator. Centuries of slowly widened

H. St. John Philby, *Arabian Days*, 1948, p. 158.

identification of the individual with the common claim of humanity lie behind the effective working of the European machine of government: in the Ottoman East the individual is considered alone; there are no common claims of humanity.¹ He therefore disapproved, when in this frame of mind, of the reforming Young Turks; those of the 1870s, of Midhat Pasha's time, would be for him ' "Young men in a hurry" ' who 'had snatched at the end of an evolution hardly begun, without taking into account the immaturity of Osmanli society in political education and political capacity';² while the members of the Committee of Union and Progress, which carried out the 1908 Revolution, would be 'military ex-attachés, . . . Jew bankers and officials from Salonika, and . . . doctors, lawyers and other *intellectuels* fresh from Paris' who understood the Asia they had to govern much less than the Europe where they received their training.³

Whether he inclined to approve of reforms or not, Hogarth always expressed his misgivings over the prospect of the downfall of Ottoman rule. In the essay of 1915, he spoke of 'Arabian fanaticism' influencing the Osmanlis in the direction of 'the obscurantist spirit of the earliest Moslems',⁴ and recorded his opinion that the secession of the Arab provinces from the Ottoman state, though it might 'sound the death-knell' of the Empire, was 'a consummation . . . not devoutly to be wished'. 'The substitution of Arab administration for Osmanli would necessarily entail European tutelage of the parts of the Arab-speaking area in which Powers like ourselves have vital interests' and that, because 'bad, as according to our standards, Turkish Government is, native Arab Government, when not in tutelage to Europeans, has generally proved itself worse, when tried in the Ottoman area in modern times'.⁵ Two years after the publication of this essay, he set out to explore, in a long paper which appeared in *The Arab Bulletin*, the contrasts between Arab and Turkish rule, in order to strike a balance between 'the faults as well as the merits of those we are about to set up; and the virtues as well as the vices of those we are setting down'. The period of genuine Arab rule, he pointed out, was very short — much less than a century. 'The brevity of purely Arab Empire was determined less by the force of non-Arab elements than by the inability of Arabs themselves to develop any system of imperial administration more adequate than the Patriarchal.' The Turks, on the other hand, 'have supplied to Sunni Islam the only enduring political force which it has known — its single steady influence.' They, in contrast to the Arabs, were incapable of excellence in the arts of civilization, and of originality in ideas, but they were 'able to administer a system of government and to hold by it, through good or ill: as full of the will to power as any Arab, with more effective

¹ *A Wandering Scholar* . . ., pp. 90-5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

² *The Balkans*, p. 360.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 379-80.

sense of national unity'. 'Left to himself,' he concluded, 'if there were a fair field and no favour, he [the Turk] would undoubtedly continue to govern the Arab as ill as in the past, but to govern and police him always. It is not from failure of either will or capacity', he affirmed, 'that the Turk must give way: nor, when the roof falls on the Philistines, will it be because his old strength has returned to the Arab.'

There is a fineness in Hogarth's hesitancy, which betokens a disinterested pursuit of coherence. Hogarth was not an advocate, and the meretricious urgency of special pleading does not sound in his argument. Even when he defended a political interest which seemed to him worthy of defence, he would not evade or gloss over points detrimental to its case. Thus, in an article of 1920, written to advance the Sharifian cause in Syria, he would point out 'the lack of a general and profound local sentiment of hostility to Turkish rule' in Syria before the war, and how under Abdul Hamid, the province was not oppressed, but did enjoy, on the contrary, conspicuous improvement in the conditions of both urban and rural life.¹

This is very far from the extravagance of Lawrence, and it is instructive to see what a change an idea suffers when it passes from Hogarth to him, when it ceases to minister to the pacific needs of inquiry and becomes, instead, a weapon of apologetics, useful for offence and defence. Take the comparison which Hogarth makes between Turkish and Arab government and observe what becomes of it in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Where Hogarth argues, goes forward, then returns, hesitates, contrasts and compares, Lawrence lays down the law, categorical and pressing, approval and assent the object of his designs on the reader:

We could see that a new factor was needed in the East, some power or race which would outweigh the Turks in numbers, in output, and in mental activity. No encouragement was given us by history to think that these qualities could be supplied ready-made from Europe. The efforts of European Powers to keep a footing in the Asiatic Levant had been uniformly disastrous, and we disliked no Western people enough to inveigle them into further attempts. Our successor and solution must be local and fortunately the standard of efficiency required was local also. The competition would be with Turkey; and Turkey was rotten.²

How the rhetoric beckons, the revelation of momentous decisions and policies: 'We could see that a new factor was needed in the East', the weighty appeal to history: 'No encouragement was given us by

¹ D. G. Hogarth, 'The Burden of Syria', *Nineteenth Century and After*, February, 1920.

² S.P., p. 56.

history', the deprecatory and humorous benevolence: 'we disliked no Western people enough to inveigle them into further attempts', until we are brought up against the inevitable conclusion: 'our successor and solution must be local', and it must seem in the end that a competition of rottenness with rottenness is not only inherent in the nature of things, but positively beneficial. Hogarth balanced between alternative explanations of Ottoman incapacity. These alternatives ruled out each other, but Hogarth never made up his mind which was the more satisfactory. Either the Ottoman state was perishing from the imitation of Europe, or it was perishing precisely because it was Ottoman. Lawrence, however, took up both contentions and used them both in *The Seven Pillars* to prove that the Ottomans had to disappear, and to justify his actions in helping to bring about their destruction. On the one hand, therefore, he ascribed the parlous condition of the empire to Young Turk doctrine and method: 'Their administration had become perforce an affair of files and telegrams, of high finance, eugenics, calculations. Inevitably the old governors, who had governed by force of hand or force of character, illiterate, direct, personal, had to pass away . . . The shallow and half-polished Committee of the Young Turks were descendants of Greeks, Albanians, Circassians, Bulgars, Armenians, Jews — anything but Seljuks or Ottomans. The commons ceased to feel in tune with their governors, whose culture was Levantine, and whose political theory was French.'¹ The Turks, therefore, had to go, but their going was elsewhere justified by this same 'French' political theory: 'I meant to make a new nation, to restore a lost influence, to give twenty millions of Semites the foundation on which to build an inspired dream-palace of their national thoughts';² so much so that when, later in his book, he came to deal with the Sharifian negotiations with the Ottoman government after the outbreak of the Revolt, he showed his disapproval of Jamal Pasha who, according to him, was 'by instinct' Islamic, and, therefore, presumably no believer in French theories, and bestowed his approval on those sections of the Ottoman General Staff 'who were too keen on the "Turkishness" of their mission to deny the right of autonomy to the Arabic provinces of the Ottoman Empire'.³

The Turks then, whether Young or Old, found no favour in Lawrence's eyes. All his actions were to be directed towards the destruction of their Empire. This much is clear. What is not clear is why, exactly, he should have desired this with so much passion; for the reasons that he advances are not reasons, properly speaking, but pretexts. At first sight, it may appear this is not so. He was anti-

¹ S.P., p. 54. Compare with Hogarth's argument above, and in *The Balkans*, p. 380.

² S.P., p. 23.

³ S.P., p. 571.

Turk, it may be said, and anti-French, because he had convinced himself of the justice of the Arab cause, because he had made himself the champion of Arab nationhood, against all comers. Does he not declare it himself? '... to make a new nation, to restore a lost influence, to give twenty millions of Semites the foundation on which to build an inspired dream-palace', 'to extrude the Turk from all Arabic-speaking land in Asia', 'to assert the Arabic-speaking peoples' desire or desert of freedom and self-government'.¹ A high aim and a generous ideal: freedom taken, not given, the 'acquiescent native' awakened to 'the discipline of responsibility', fear, a mean over-rated motive.² And consider what he had to contend against: an Indian Government intent on making Mesopotamia a colony like Burma, a British Government thirsting for petrol royalties, and the greed of France in the Levant.³ There was no question on which side a man should be. Besides, there was good faith involved, his own honour and good name. Should the British Government betray, for the sake of imperialist interests, the Arab national movement, he himself would be dishonoured. Five times in *The Seven Pillars* he recurs to the subject of his dishonour. Because the Arabs believed he was 'a free agent of the British Government' and because they believed in persons not in institutions, he had, owing to the exigencies of war, made certain promises to them. And, as he suspected that these would not be kept, he felt 'continually and bitterly ashamed'.⁴ He felt like 'a trickster'; his business was fraudulent; he had joined a conspiracy; he was raising the Arabs on false pretences; they were his dupes; he was enveloped in a mantle of fraud; he was engaged in the 'theft of souls'.⁵ But in the end, such emphatic protestations must engender doubt. For after all, the Arabs, according to him, were revolting to assert their freedom, presumably of their own volition, not in pursuance of a bargain. But if it was a bargain that they were fulfilling with their rebellion, it was, of course, right and proper that the British should keep to their side of the bargain. But, it may be asked, what had Lawrence to do with the bargain, and why should he feel dishonoured if the bargain were not kept? He was not the British Government after all, nor the keeper of its conscience. Neither did the British Government authorize him to make bargains or distribute promises. What business, then, had he to 'endorse' promises, especially if, as he says, he 'had no previous or inner knowledge of the McMahon pledges or the Sykes-Picot Treaty'?⁶ He says further that he had 'no shadow of leave to engage the Arabs, unknowing, in a gamble of life and death'.⁷ But when he came to them, we must observe, they had already engaged themselves beyond recall. His

¹ S.P., pp. 23, 196 and 281.

² S.P., pp. 281 and 657-8.

³ S.P., pp. 58 and 23.

⁴ S.P., p. 23.

⁵ S.P., pp. 24, 387, 515 and 567.

⁶ S.P., p. 282.

⁷ S.P., p. 283.

moral dilemma is artificial. He was an officer sent to help men who had no experience of modern war, and supply them with money and ammunition. If he insisted on assuming the mantle of a higher authority, he might perhaps feel sometimes that the mantle was fraudulent, but this has nothing to do either with the British Government or with its promises. But, in truth, bargains cautiously struck, agreements which prudent and worldly wise diplomats penned carefully, and qualified circumspectly interested Lawrence not at all. He burnt with an abstract, metaphysical fever that did not brook the earthy compromises of conflicting interests. The task that he proposed to himself was not the prosaic one of seeing that England honoured its promises — he must have known that these amounted to little — but the far more strenuous one of ensuring in the face of the comfortable arrangements of functionaries and the weaknesses and ambitions of human beings, the triumph of an idea. He was a doctrinaire. The currency he dealt with was that of moral claims: 'I vowed to make the Arab Revolt the engine of its own success . . . and vowed to lead it so madly in the final victory that expediency should counsel to the Powers a fair settlement of the Arabs' moral claims.'¹ And the results that he claimed to bring about were not those which Foreign Offices are accustomed to envisage: 'One such wave (and not the last) I raised and rolled before the breath of an idea till it reached its crest, and toppled over and fell at Damascus.'² Agreements and pledges are not designed to cope with waves. But in *The Seven Pillars* Lawrence argues as though they did, and needs must pretend, therefore, to prove himself right, that pledges were dishonoured and agreements torn up. But he gives fair warning of what he proposes to do, for does he not tell us at the beginning of his book that: 'In this book also, for the last time, I mean to be my own judge of what to say'? And should we therefore not be prepared to see him here too, as he says he did in his reports, 'conceal the true stories of things'?³

It was not squeamishness and disgust at the duplicity of England that made him a partisan of the Sharif and the Arab nationalists. For he was prepared to condone duplicity on the part of the latter. Very soon after the outbreak of the Revolt, the Turks began to contact Faisal and his followers and to tempt them to a reconciliation. 'He [Faisal] had long been in touch with elements in Turkey', says Lawrence, but he hastens to explain that this was a profound tactical move to sow dissension within the Ottoman Government and to commit them to compromising offers: 'At first we were offered autonomy for Hejaz. Then Syria was admitted to the benefit: then Mesopotamia. Faisal seemed still not content, so Jemal's deputy . . . boldly added a crown to the offered share of Hussein of Mecca.'⁴ But it soon tran-

¹ S.P., p. 283.

² S.P., p. 41.

³ S.P., p. 24.

⁴ S.P., p. 571.

spires that this is not the whole story. Two pages later, Lawrence declares: 'Events at the end made abortive these complicated negotiations.'¹ Was it then envisaged that they might succeed? To Liddell Hart, who was writing a book about him, Lawrence would say later that 'Faisal never told him about his negotiations in the summer of 1918', that Faisal was 'definitely "selling us"', and that when he, Lawrence, found Faisal out he 'pretended to take it as a piece of political tactics, and suggested to Faisal to develop'.² At any rate, whether Faisal was negotiating, or only pretending to negotiate with the Turks, Lawrence did not disclose these negotiations to his superiors: 'I feared that the British might be shaken at Faisal thus entertaining separate relations. Yet in fairness to the fighting Arabs, we could not close all avenues of accommodation with Turkey'.³ He objected to duplicity on the part of England, but not on that of the Sharif and his followers. While on active operations, some of these had entered into communication with the Turks, and the British authorities at Cairo came to know of these illicit contacts: 'We rung up Cairo and announced that the situation at Guweira was thoroughly good, and no treachery abroad. This may have been hardly true; but since Egypt kept us alive by stinging herself, we must reduce impolitic truth to keep her confident and ourselves a legend'.⁴ For this incorruptible, then, there were, as for ordinary men of affairs, politic and impolitic truths. And it may be that his indulgence for the Sharifians was not limited to the hiding of impolitic truth. If Abd al-Rahman al-Shabandar is to be believed, it was Lawrence himself who encouraged Faisal to keep negotiations open with the Turks 'should Allenby fail in his attack and the British make peace with the Conservative Turks'.⁵ He pretended to Cairo, he pretended to Faisal and perhaps to himself. Perhaps it was necessary that he should, in the middle of delicate and dangerous operations. This is one of the risks of the game he had decided to play. But if everything and everybody was involved in pretence, why confine the indignation and the denunciation to British and French policies? Was deceit on the part of Faisal more pardonable than on the part of the Allies? And, if it was necessary that he should pretend in the midst of action, was it necessary that he should pretend to his readers, in a book which was to be a work of art, a distillation of past experience? 'Pretences', he

¹ S.P., p. 573.

² B. H. Liddell Hart, *T. E. Lawrence to his biographer*, 1938, p. 142. Liddell Hart's notes on talk with Lawrence, August 1st, 1933.

³ S.P., p. 573.

⁴ S.P., p. 335.

⁵ Abd al-Rahman al-Shabandar 'Lawrence fi al-mizan' [Lawrence in the balance], *Al-Muqtataf*, vol. LXXIX, 1931. He added 'and King Faisal sent a friend of ours to Constantinople for this purpose'. Al-Shabandar was a Syrian nationalist leader who had fled from Jamal Pasha's inquisition in Syria in 1915 and had known Lawrence in Cairo.

knew, 'are hollow worthless things.'¹ Perhaps, then, he could not distil his experience, and perhaps *The Seven Pillars* was a mere continuation of the tangled campaign he had chosen to wage, an additional weapon in his private war. Can this be the reason for his discontent with the book? For of course, if the book was a piece of special pleading, it might be *A Triumph*, but the triumph would be hollow, impotent and the Kingdom remain impregnable.

Shall it then be said that Lawrence was a partisan doctrinaire? There are many reasons why he deserves such an appellation. But if he was a partisan, what was his party? The Sharif? The sons of the Sharif? The Sharif, according to him, was impossible: he was an ineffective tyrant. 'My object with the Arabs:' he wrote to Robert Graves in June 1927, 'to make them stand on their own feet. To do this it was necessary to check centralizing policy of King Hussein, who envisaged a united Arab world, under himself at Mecca. Mecca was a hotbed of religion, quite impossible as the capital of any sort of state: the worst town in the Arab world. Yet for the war we had to pretend that he led, since unity is necessary in a movement.'² The sons of the Sharif then, perhaps? Not the eldest, Ali: 'His manner was dignified and admirable, but direct; and he struck me as a pleasant gentleman, conscientious, without great force of character, nervous and rather tired';³ definitely not Abdulla, the next: 'I had made up my mind that Abdulla was not the necessary leader';⁴ as for Zaid, the youngest, he was 'a shy, white, beardless lad of perhaps nineteen, calm and flippant, no zealot for the Revolt'; he would definitely not do. Faisal, then, perhaps? He had been impressed with Faisal, from the first moment when he saw him 'framed between the uprights of a black doorway, . . . a white figure waiting tensely' and 'felt at first glance that this was the man I had come to Arabia to seek — the leader who would bring the Arab Revolt to full glory'.⁵ Faisal was 'hot-tempered and sensitive', 'appetite and physical weakness were mated in him, with the spur of courage';⁶ he was 'full of dreams, and the capacity to realize them, with keen personal insight and a very efficient man of business'.⁷ Faisal, who looked 'like the monument of Richard I at Fontevraud',⁸ 'a prophet who, if veiled would give cogent form to the idea behind the activity of the Arab Revolt', was 'all and more than we had hoped for, much more than our halting course deserved'.⁹ And as the Revolt grew and prospered, Faisal 'showed himself worthy of this achievement . . . He was recognized

¹ S.P., p. 30.

² R. Graves, *T. E. Lawrence to his biographer*, 1938, p. 51. See also *Letters*, p. 577, where he speaks of 'all our detestation of his misgovernment'.

³ S.P., p. 76.

⁴ S.P., p. 74.

⁵ S.P., p. 92.

⁶ S.P., p. 98.

⁷ T. E. Lawrence, *Secret Dispatches from Arabia*, 1939, p. 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁹ S.P., p. 99.

as a force transcending tribe, superseding blood chiefs, greater than jealousies. The Arab movement became in the best sense national, since within it all Arabs were at one, and for it private interests must be set aside; and in this movement chief place, by right of application and by right of ability, had been properly earned by the man who filled it for those few weeks of triumph and longer months of disillusion after Damascus had been set free'.¹ Shall it then be said that he was Faisal's partisan, that he believed in Faisal and thought him worthy of service and devotion? No! For suddenly, towards the end of *The Seven Pillars*, he comes out with this surprise: 'Faisal was a brave, weak, ignorant spirit, trying to do work for which only a genius, a prophet or a great criminal, was fitted. I served him out of pity, a motive which degraded us both.'² And it must be out of pity, too, that Lawrence gives Faisal the quality of courage, for to Liddell Hart he was to say some years later: 'Faisal [was] a timid man, hated running into danger, yet would do anything for Arab freedom — his one passion, purely unselfish. Here, as later in Iraq, it made him face things and risks which he hated. At original attack on Medina he had nerved himself to put on a bold front, and the effort had shaken him so that he never courted danger in battle again.'

'As for his statesmanship,' Lawrence went on, 'his defect was that he always listened to his momentary adviser, despite his own better judgment.' When Liddell Hart asked him why then he portrayed Faisal in his reports as a heroic leader, Lawrence said that 'it was the only way to get the British to support the Arabs — physical courage is essential demand of typical British officer.'³

Was it then an idea that secured his loyalty? Perhaps he was an Arab nationalist. Had he not spoken of freedom, and how it is taken, not given, of 'the Arabic-speaking peoples' desire or desert of freedom and self-government', of the right of the Arabic-speaking provinces to autonomy? But here again, it is easier to see his disbelief in the Arab national movement than his belief in it. '... their idea of nationality', he writes of the Hijaz in a report of November 1916, 'is the independence of tribes and parishes and their idea of national union is episodic, combined resistance to an intruder. Constructive Politics, an organized state, and an extensive empire are not only beyond their capacity, but anathema to their instincts... Unless we, or our Allies, make an efficient Arab empire, there will never be more than a discordant mosaic of provincial administrations'.⁴ '... The words Syria and Syrian', he writes in another report published in *The Arab Bulletin* in March 1917, 'are foreign terms. Unless he has learnt

¹ S.P., p. 181.

² S.P., p. 582. In the manuscript version of *The Seven Pillars*, Lawrence is even more emphatic in this sense.

³ Liddell Hart, p. 188.

⁴ *Secret Dispatches* . . ., p. 39.

English or French, the inhabitant of these parts has no words to describe all his country . . . *Sham* in Arabic is the town of Damascus. An Aleppine always calls himself an Aleppine, a Beyrouti a Beyrouti, and so down to the smallest villages. This verbal poverty indicates a political condition. There is no national feeling.' 'Time seems to have proclaimed', he again says in the same report, 'that autonomous union is beyond the powers of such a people. In history, Syria is always the corridor between sea and desert, joining Africa to Asia, and Arabia to Europe. It has been a prize-ring for the great peoples lying about it . . . and when given momentary independence by the weakness of its neighbours, it has at once resolved itself freely into Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western "kingdoms" . . . ; for if Syria is by nature a vassal country, it is also by habit a country of agitations.'¹ 'The phrase "Arab Movement",' he wrote in 1918, 'was invented in Cairo as a common denomination for all the vague discontent against Turkey which before 1916 existed in the Arab provinces. In a non-constitutional country these naturally took on a revolutionary character and it was convenient to pretend to find a common ground in all of them. They were most of them very local, and very jealous, but had to be considered, in the hope that one or the other of them might bear fruit.'² He did not believe, then, that an Arab national movement existed. But can it be that he was nonetheless an Arab nationalist, in the belief that nationalism was beneficial and necessary to the Arabs? Does he not say that he 'meant to make a new nation', and that 'so high an aim called out the inherent nobility of their minds, and made them play a generous part in events'?³ Whence then, this prudent imperial stance, this note of diplomatic worldliness: 'They [the Arabs] were weak in material resources, and even after success would be, since their world was agricultural and pastoral, without minerals and could never be strong in modern armaments. Were it otherwise, we should have had to pause', he sagely warns his readers in *The Seven Pillars*, 'before evoking in the strategic centre of the Middle East new national movements of such abounding vigour.'⁴ 'Remember,' he reassures Liddell Hart, 'I have always been a realist and opportunist in tactics: and Arab unity is a madman's notion.'⁵ Why then all the talk of betrayal, the insinuations of sordid interests, the anger and the scorn flashing through *The Seven Pillars*? Was it for this that he agitated, and intrigued, and accused and denounced, for an 'imposed government' in Syria, to which England would be 'founder's kin'? For, according to him, in Syria, an Arab government would have to be imposed: 'Whatever the limits of future politics, it can hardly be contested that like a European government, an Arab government in

¹ *Secret Dispatches* . . . , pp. 77-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³ S.P., p. 23.

⁴ S.P., p. 13.

⁵ Liddell Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Syria, today or tomorrow, would be an imposed one, as the former Arab governments were.¹ He had started with an imposed Turkish government which he wanted to overthrow, and he ended with an imposed Arab government which he wanted to set up.

He was of course, aware of the nature of the Arab government which he wished to 'impose' on Syria. It was a Sunni Muslim government, 'pretending to revive the Abbassides or Ayubides'.² Sunni Muslim sentiment was the driving force behind 'Arab' nationalism, as it was the force that kept together the Ottoman Empire. The chiefs of the movement which Lawrence supported were Sunni dissidents, in revolt against the Sunni Ottomans, but not, for all this, the less imbued with what has been so well described as 'that deep craving for temporal dominion which actuates Sunnis'. Arab nationalism was the Sunni spirit of dominion, exacerbated and made virulent by the illegal and violent manner in which its leaders attempted to wrest power from the Ottoman state. The Arab nationalists would insist as much as the Ottomans on Muslim supremacy, but they would be incapable of practising the contemptuous, easy-going tolerance of the Ottomans which made Muslim supremacy bearable to the heterogeneous populations under their rule. The Arab nationalists would not be able to practise this tolerance because power was new to them, and because, unlike the Ottomans, they would be uncertain, and therefore violent in the exercise of it; and further, because the very doctrine in which they expressed their craving for dominion — the European doctrine of nationalism — made non-conformity difficult, and the demands of the rulers on the ruled more insidious and more sweeping than ever. 'Our kingdoms lay in each man's mind'; 'we had to arrange their minds in order of battle'; 'there were many humiliating material limits, but no moral impossibilities':³ so Lawrence congratulates himself on the discovery of a new method for winning battles without the shedding of blood; and his jubilation seems to us sinister in the age of *Newspeak* and *Double-think*, of the re-education camp and the political commissar. The nationalists were to learn, and that was perhaps the chief lesson that he taught them, that there were indeed no moral impossibilities.

'I wish I hadn't gone out there: the Arabs are like a page I have turned over: and sequels are rotten things', he wrote in 1921.⁴ 'The Arab thing is finished,' he declared a year later, 'and is passionately unwholesome in my eyes.'⁵ That Lawrence should speak in such violently personal terms of the public and far-reaching events in which he had been involved, is in character. If it is asked why he

¹ *Secret Dispatches* . . . , pp. 78 and 161.

² *Ibid.*, p. 79. ³ *S.P.*, pp. 198 and 201.

⁴ In a letter to Robert Graves of May 21st, 1921. Graves, p. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

involved himself in a cause which was, on his own showing, so dubious, why he 'prostituted' himself and his talents, espousing sordid quarrels and furthering unedifying ambitions, the answer must be sought more in his agitated and forceful personality than in the events in which he happened, quite by chance, to be mixed up. He believed neither in the Sharif, nor in Faisal, nor in the Arab national movement. Neither when he was in the East, nor when he was agitating for them in Paris and London, nor when he was writing *The Seven Pillars*. Had he believed in them, he would not have declared the 1921 Middle Eastern settlement — so poor and patched up and tattered a thing — 'the big achievement of my life: of which the War was a preparation';² nor would *The Seven Pillars*, tendentious as it is in its account of the events, have been so unskilful and so contradictory in the defence of their cause. *The Seven Pillars* is a book which seeks to justify, and to prove right, not so much the Arab movement, as his own actions. He therefore chose whatever explanations seemed to offer the most convincing pretexts for his actions, however damaging they were to the cause he had adopted. Ultimately, he was not interested in ideas. Ideas he took as they offered; in the event, he took them from Hogarth. He was a doctrinaire empty of doctrine, and a partisan without party. He was oblivious of the consequences of his actions on others, of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood. What interested him rather were his own sensations, and to see how he could manipulate events. He was, in truth, engaged on an illicit adventure, in a kind of witchcraft and black magic. He had made a discovery, that 'mental and physical were inseparably one',³ and that there were no moral impossibilities; he wanted to see what the power of one will could accomplish, to what extent the mental could rule the physical, and whether indeed there were no moral impossibilities. It was a wager that he accepted, out of curiosity almost, in a scientific spirit: 'the conjunction of Semites, an idea, and an armed prophet held illimitable possibilities';⁴ he would see where his possibilities might lead, but he was under no illusions as to the significance of the experiment: 'To the clear-sighted failure was the only goal. 'We must believe, through and through, that there was no victory except to go down in death fighting and crying for failure itself.'⁵ But there are sequels even to failure, and sequels, as he knew, were rotten things.'

¹ His own expression, S.P., p. 29.

² S.P., p. 477.

⁴ S.P., p. 149.

Graves, p. 80.

⁵ S.P., p. 422.

THE CHILD: THE CIRCUS: AND 'JUDE THE OBSCURE'

EMMA CLIFFORD

1

THOMAS HARDY was always careful to assert, both in his writing and in conversation, that in his own opinion he was not a philosopher; and, as more than one critic has noticed, he favoured the word 'impression' when seeking to define the process whereby, as an artist, he adumbrated notions of man and the universe. But no critic, as far as I am aware, has yet attempted to examine in any detail the implications of Hardy's statements concerning his impressions; and indeed it would seem to be a formidable, and perhaps hopeless, task to attempt to do so.

In a letter to Dr Litwinski, written in March 1917, Hardy talks grandiosely of 'impressions of the age'; in the Preface to *Poems of the Past and the Present* he writes vaguely of 'unadjusted impressions'; and in the Preface to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* he dogmatically asserts that, 'a novel is an impression, not an argument'. And sometimes Hardy adds the tantalizing word 'seemings' to his statements on this matter; in the same letter to Dr Litwinski he declares that the views in all his works are 'seemings, provisional impressions only', and *Jude the Obscure*, at first sight the most realistic of his novels, is offered to us as 'a series of seemings, or personal impressions'.

When speaking of his view of life Hardy has a tendency to plead vagueness and lack of system, and it is unlikely that any one statement of this kind could form a basis for any comprehensive criticism of the novels; but, in a letter which Mrs Hardy considers was written sometime in December 1920, Hardy gives his estimate of his personal rôle in the matter and, because an impression is itself so personal a thing, it may be rewarding to consider this particular statement and to attempt to apply its implications to at least some aspects of his work.

Hardy writes:

I have no philosophy — merely what I have often explained to be only a confused heap of impressions, like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show.¹

This statement gives the quality of Hardy's impression, which is childlike, and also tells us that it arises from contemplation of something resembling a conjuring show. We should expect the latter

¹ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy*, p. 219.

from what we know of Hardy's view of life; and the 'bewildered child' is perhaps, initially at least, more interesting.

2

Consideration of the children in the novels of Thomas Hardy yields some interesting points which, as far as I am aware, are not sufficiently appreciated in Hardy criticism; and because critical comment on the children, and especially on Little Father Time, tends to be not only deficient, but also varied and uncertain, I wish to begin by accepting the fact that almost all the children in Thomas Hardy's novels are to some extent weird and that he himself may not have been a very ordinary child.

Hardy retains his childlike qualities in his adult years, and Edmund Blunden quotes H. M. Tomlinson's impression of him.

Sometimes when talking to him you felt this child was as old as humanity and knew all about us but that he did not attach importance to his knowledge because he did not know that he had it. Just by chance, in the drift of the talk, there would be a word by Hardy, not only wide of the mark but apparently not directed to it. Why did he say it? On the way home, or some weeks later his comment would be recalled, and with the revealing light on it.¹

Tomlinson's observations show us that Hardy himself never loses the somewhat out-of-touch wisdom of a self-sufficient child. And he tells us that the child is old. Indeed, all we know about Hardy as a child is slightly fantastic. He is a dreamy, precocious boy who does not like the company of other children; his mother is proud of his forwardness and he prefers to be with adults, he may even have fallen in love. He does not like intrusions into his private world. He hates to be touched, he dislikes receiving presents, and he is very shy and does not want to be noticed in any way by others. And, like Peter Pan, he has a feeling that childhood itself may well encompass all that he will want to know.

Reflecting on his experiences of the world as far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. Other boys were talking of when they would be men; he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot, and to know no more people than he already knew. . . . (*Early Life*, p. 19)

More than one child in Hardy's novels has this characteristic of satiety, of having already seen enough of life. And, of course, some of them are old. Little Father Time is age masquerading as Juvenil-

¹ Edmund Blunden, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 273.

ity; as Johnny Nunsuch trudges across Egdon away from Eustacia's bonfire, he sings 'in an old voice'; and, after the shock of the horse being killed, Abe Durbeyfield has 'the furrows of fifty years . . . extemporized on his young face'. Some, like Jude in his youth, have felt the pricks of life somewhat before their time; and others, like Charley Dewey, have a fierce and ancient ugliness, 'with face and hands of hideous blackness, and nose like a guttering candle . . . looking back over his shoulder with an expression of great sin on his face, like Cain as the Outcast in Bible pictures'. (*Under the Greenwood Tree*, p. 46)

Both in terms of ironic contrast and real and grotesque identity Hardy has no difficulty in associating childhood with the ultimate horrors of human existence. In one of the fantastic scenes that appear so easily before him he sees death masking children at play:

A skeleton — the one used in these lectures — is hung up inside the window. We face it as we sit. Outside the band is playing, and the children are dancing. I can see their little figures through the window past the skeleton dangling in front. (*Early Life*, p. 204).

Hardy does not believe that young and pretty childhood has any place in the modern world; and, as he sees it, the 'newer' parts of the universe are going ahead as it were from the beginning with the production of aged infants. On receiving Little Father Time from Australia, Sue Bridehead solemnly avers that, 'these preternaturally old boys almost always come from new countries'. This is such an absurd statement that it is almost impossible to tell what Hardy is trying to say, but he is careful to point out that Sue is speaking 'tenderly', and whatever his conception of childhood really is, we cannot doubt that there are very real problems of ill-adjustment and suffering.

Hardy tells us that the child, who is seemingly also the adult, is bewildered; and when the children in his novels are drawn into their greatest tragedy by the conscious action of their elders, the problems that the children cannot face are fundamental problems of birth and generation. These problems involve responsibilities concerning existence and nurture that cannot apparently, in the modern world, be taken by anybody — young or old; and because the sin lies at the door of childhood, Little Father Time speaks for them all when he declares that it would have been better not to have been born at all.

Mrs Yeobright chooses to tell Johnny Nunsuch of the misery that comes from the possession of ungrateful children. He does not particularly want to know about this, and when she becomes ill he cannot appreciate the seriousness of her condition. He runs away

and leaves her to her death. When Clym reproaches him for this, 'the child shrank away from the gaze of his questioner', and as the months go by he becomes more and more ailing and gradually shrinks away from life. Sue too gives her confidence unasked. She chooses to tell Little Father Time of the added burden of the baby that is coming, and he too does not want to know. He is seized with horror, and in his despair of his unwanted situation in a hostile world kills both Sue's babies and himself.

For all their oddity these children of Hardy's imagination are piteously childlike. As he is himself, they are at one and the same time old and immature—which is also a characteristic of Hardy's universe. In spite of his gravity and precocity Hardy nevertheless knows of himself that, 'I was a child till I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 or 50'. In so far as Hardy's children carry the burden of their years it is in a morbid, sometimes entirely physical, sense, rather than in any wisdom or knowledge that may have come from experience of life. Their child-world can be pathetically inadequate when measured against whatever Thomas Hardy sees to be the outside world of everyday reality. Hence their violence, their running away into hysterical illnesses, and their adoption of pretty attitudes of being rather sadly lost. Even the rich little girls in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are like melancholy bullfinches as they seek a substitute mother in Elfride—for all the world like the Lost Boys pleading with Wendy. Little Father Time will not settle with Jude and Sue until he has made absolutely sure that Sue will be his 'mother'. Johnny Nunsuch's mother is a witch.

This reminds us that certain aspects of Hardy's child-world are familiar to us all. Little boys like Abe and Johnny are frequently afraid of just those things that have frightened everybody at sometime in childhood. They have childish fancies of shapes in the dark, hidden wild animals in lairs, and ghosts and giants. Hardy understands the fears and emotional insecurities of childhood, but he will not let it go at that. If children are inadequate in some way to bear life's burdens, they can manage very well in others. They may to some extent fail emotionally, but they have their own way of looking at life. And, sometimes in the company of his preposterous children and at other times alone in his own curious immaturity, Hardy makes the validity of this child-awareness one of the standards by which he estimates his impressions of the universe.

Diggory Venn tells Johnny Nunsuch how children see the world.

'You are rather afraid of me. Do you know what I be?'
The child surveyed his vermillion figure up and down with
much misgiving, and finally said,
'Yes.'

'Well, what?'

'The reddleman!' he faltered.

'Yes, that's what I be. Though there's more than one. You little children think there's only one cuckoo, one fox, one giant, one devil, and one reddleman, when there's lots of us all'. (*The Return of the Native*, p. 87).

If Diggory Venn is right, Johnny and all other children see a world that is not unlike that of the toy shop, the circus, or the fair. A world in which all things exist for themselves alone without relationship one to another, and where things and people are anonymous, highly coloured, over-simplified, and often oversized. Little Father Time takes this particular kind of awareness into the world of everyday:

The boy seemed to have begun with the generals of life, and never to have concerned himself with the particulars. To him the houses, the willows, and the obscure fields beyond, were apparently regarded not as brick residences, pollards, meadows; but as human dwellings in the abstract, vegetation, and the wide dark world. (*Jude the Obscure*, p. 334).

Nevertheless, Little Father Time occasionally particularizes. For instance, when he is shocked. But shock does not bring him back to reality, it takes him further into fantasy. When there are no lodgings to be had in Christminster and Sue and her children receive some unkindness from those who will not take them in, the shocked and frightened little boy feels lost and does not like Christminster because, 'Are the great old houses gaols?'

It is a typically dismal image, and Hardy's children do not enjoy their fantasies. Abe Durbeyfield, with his head full of shapes in the night, is curious to know what might have happened if man had pitched on a sound universe rather than a blighted one. Johnny Nunsuch is a 'mere automaton' as he tends Eustacia's lurid bonfire in the dark, and Hardy stresses again and again his lack of capacity for ordinary enjoyment. Little Father Time cannot be interested in what usually interests other small boys, and those things that he does notice he does not like, 'his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of time, and appeared not to care about what it saw'. In Hardy's world even singing children are miserable, and as the young Durbeyfields sing a chorus of mournful hymns before they leave their Marlott home for ever, they realize—as Miss Duveen does—how *sad* life is! And ordinary palliatives will not work. Arthur, in Mr de la Mare's story, can run away from the world of clear fantasy into the shadows and obscurities of his grandmother's

home; but, even if Little Father Time finds a 'mother', even if he goes to school and tries to play with other children, still he will remain 'doubly awake, like an enslaved and dwarfed Divinity', seeing more than there is to see, knowing less than there is to know, and even in death still looking while others' eyes are closed, 'his glazed eyes were slanted into the room; but those of the girl and the baby boy were closed'. And this capacity for seeing unnamed horror in the backwash of time is a characteristic of immature and frightened awareness.

It has long been a commonplace of criticism to note the extraordinary visual powers of Thomas Hardy, and recent critics have tended to stress the personal aspect of this matter. John Holloway emphasizes what Hardy himself calls his 'idiosyncratic mode of regard',¹ and A. J. Guerard says of Hardy that, '... he wanted to be more than a realist. He wanted to escape the banality of exact observation and to express his particular awareness of the grotesque, the occult, and the strange. He was determined to see a ghost'.²

As Dr Ridder Barzin has pointed out, Hardy's familiarity with the grotesque is closely associated with his personal view of life which, because it obliges him to live in an unpredictable scheme of things, leaves him peculiarly free to wander into fantasy.³ This too has become a commonplace of criticism, but, as far as I am aware, little emphasis has been placed upon Hardy's knowledge of the extent to which the shock of existence in a hostile and confusing environment may tamper with traditional characteristics of human awareness and cause his characters to live, as Aeneas Manston and Michael Henchard sometimes live, in 'an outer chamber of the mind'.

There is no escaping the fact that Thomas Hardy has an uncommon flair for private worlds. Writing as he is of mankind in a strange and new universal scheme, he has few reticences about taking enormous liberties with human personality and many characters in his novels perceive reality in their own highly individual fashion. He himself is among the most original of observers. It is a mistake to suppose that he sees everything through the eyes of Darwin, Comte, or Schopenhauer, or to mind too much that he is a Victorian, or even the last of the Elizabethans. Hardy lives in the same world as Tess, Jude and Little Father Time — and he himself creates it. He too is bruised by circumstance, and he too knows only those things that he can discover for himself in his own intensely personal impression of existence. F. A. Hedgcock, a contemporary critic, wisely stresses his great individuality:

¹ John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage*, p. 247.

² A. J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories*, pp. 47-8.

³ Louise de Ridder Barzin, *Le Pessimisme de Thomas Hardy*, p. 30.

Le point de vue de M. Hardy, nous l'avons dit, est fortement individualiste; il base tout sur la seule réalité qu'il connaisse: le *Moi*. Le monde est pour lui un panorama qu'il contemple, mais dont le contact le froisse.¹

Sometimes Hardy looks at life like a frightened child:

I found me in a great surging space,
At either end a door,
And I said: 'What is this giddying place,
With no firm-fixed floor,
That I knew not of before?'
'It is Life', said a mask-clad face.

I asked: 'But how do I come here,
Who never wished to come;
Can the light and air be made more clear,
The floor more quiescent,
And the doors set wide? They numb
Fast-locked, and fill with fear.'²

3

It is, from the point of view of criticism, a much simpler matter to study Hardy's 'philosophy' than to consider his 'impressions'; but he himself wished critics to abandon their interest in his 'ideas', an interest which was perhaps already becoming well worn in his own lifetime, and to turn their attention to an artist's impression of life as he sees it. And, if we wish to do as Hardy desires, the only course we can take is to examine carefully the complex and varied visual images in his works.

The visual images would appear, in the novels, to fall into three main categories. First, the nature images; secondly, the Wessex images, arising from local history, folk-lore and superstition, and a simple rather crude domesticity; and thirdly, images from Hardy's reading, evidence of his interest in literature, history and science. Further, in addition to giving a simple visual image of whatever kind, Hardy would often seem to complicate his effect by causing the picture to reflect another state of awareness and to carry an undertone that is evocative of some other aspect of experience that is of great significance for him. These undertones are of many different kinds, but for my purpose as I attempt to examine some of the implications of Hardy's statement that he is a bewildered child at a conjuring show, it is sufficient to concentrate on the undertone of a

¹ F. A. Hedcock, *Thomas Hardy. Penseur et Artiste*, Hatchette, 1910, p. 483.

² The Masked Face. *Moments of Vision*.

tinsel world of childhood wonder, the world of the circus, the travelling booth, and the fair.

Some of the odd appearances of Hardy's characters are startling rather than clumsy and shock the reader as they appear in sudden light out of darkness. Eustacia Vye is shocking in her tawdry artificial splendour when Charley strikes the light in the fuel-house and suddenly sees her, 'changed in sex, brilliant in colours, and armed from top to toe'. In the same novel, when Johnny Nunsuch is peering through the dark at Diggory Venn, 'he lifted the lantern to his face, and the light shone into the whites of his eyes and upon his ivory teeth, which, in contrast with the red surrounding, lent him a startling aspect enough to the gaze of a juvenile'. Venn is at least a semi-supernatural kind of character, and sometimes it is the dark characters in Hardy's novels who emerge from dark into light in this fairy-tale way. When Cytherea Graye first meets Miss Adclyffe, in a very sunny room in a Budmouth hotel, the elder woman appears, 'like a tall black figure standing in the midst of fire'. When Alec D'Urberville, a violent creature with a red mouth, bold rolling eyes, and a black moustache — who is not at all unlike a macabre kind of ringmaster — first appears before Tess's eyes, he emerges from the darkness of a tent; a tent which is one of the sillier erections on the pretty toy-like D'Urberville property. More than one of these sudden appearances suggest the tent or booth. When Fancy Day, for instance, appears at the schoolhouse window she is illuminated in the darkness like something on show. She is a very pretty sight, but perhaps a little unreal, and Michael Mail observes: 'If she'd been rale wexwork she couldn't ha' been comelier.' But Sergeant Troy's appearance in the light of Bathsheba's lantern in the dark Weatherbury plantation is the most startling of all. The sudden appearance of this brilliant brass and scarlet figure is to darkness, 'what the sound of a trumpet is to silence'. The Sergeant is a character of folk-lore and legend — as Lord David Cecil aptly remarks, he is the inconstant soldier who kisses and rides away — but he is also a huge scarlet and tinsel figure of childhood wonder, and he has upon Bathsheba 'the effect of a fairy transformation'.

Bathsheba herself is an unforgettable apparition when she drops backwards flat upon her pony's back to ride under the low boughs. As Hardy likens her to a kingfisher or a hawk and emphasizes that her eyes are gazing at the sky, the nature images would seem to take command, and yet beneath it all we know that he is describing an expert piece of trick riding. Another startling nature image from the same novel is the dog that helps poor Fanny Robin. Enormous, unidentifiable and anonymous, we are told that he is the ideal embodiment of canine greatness but, as he walks with Fanny, urging her towards Casterbridge workhouse, tugging at her dress and

making her continue on her way, we cannot avoid the notion that he is a very clever performing animal. When Marty South first appears shorn of her hair, Giles takes a look at her and says: 'Why, Marty — whatever has happened to your head? Lord, it has shrunk to nothing — it looks like an apple upon a gate-post!' It is a barbarous simile, crudely domestic and allied to nature, and suddenly Marty seems so ugly and so odd that we might almost think she is a freak. Even elegant young ladies like Lucetta can sometimes carry with them the garish atmosphere of tent or booth. On one occasion she is talking to Elizabeth Jane in her drawing-room when she is waiting for a visit from Henchard and, because of her strange position as she lounges on the sofa, Elizabeth Jane's vision of her is persistently upside down. In some ways she looks like a contortionist, like Paula Power who is reputed to be, 'very clever on the ropes and bars'.

Paula's acrobatic performance, with its finale so startlingly illuminated in a sudden burst of sunlight, reminds us that Hardy's clumsy scenes often carry undertones of significant atmosphere. As Angel, sleep-walking, carries Tess over the narrow plank with the dark water swirling below he is reminiscent of some grotesque strong man tight-rope walking in peculiarly dangerous circumstances; and when Grace Melbury first meets Fitzpiers she might well be gazing at some bizarre oddity at a fair. This is surely the clumsiest of all Hardy's clumsy scenes, for it is not every day that a young girl on first meeting the man she is to marry is shown a piece of the brain of a recently dead neighbour, a workman of her father's whom she has known all her life, stretched under a microscope for her admiration and interest. Fitzpiers is anxious to impress the charming Grace, and it must be the most extraordinary token with which to win the regard of a lady in the whole of English literature. Visually this absurd scene has something to do with science, but Grace is also peering at an outrageous peep-show.

Lord David Cecil suggests that Hardy must not be regarded as an allegorist; and, indeed, his visual images cannot be treated as symbols in any strict allegorical sense, for they have atmosphere rather than 'meaning', and to that extent they obscure rather than elucidate. When put into words they are the literary expression of Hardy's private world and they cover his work, his melodramatic stories, his stock characters and his absurd and ridiculous situations, with a complex ever-moving cloud of intensely personal impression. However, this does not mean that they are not significant of something. The three categories of visual images, nature, Wessex, and human knowledge, represent some kind of settled harmony and some kind of continuity; and the various undertones reflect disturbing factors that disrupt harmony and continuity. And, if this is

not making it altogether too tidy and systematizing one of the vaguest of writers much more than we ought, it is possible that the undertone of the unreal world of clowning, contortion and hectic brightness, as beams of light shine into darkness to catch performers as they everlastingly 'come round', may be the nearest that Thomas Hardy gets to some kind of hell.¹

The extent to which Hardy's familiarity with unseen realities can be associated with emotional difficulties arising from his attitude to religion has yet to be determined, and much thought still needs to be given to his exact position in such matters; but it would be fairly safe to say that, as a naturally religious man torn away by the knowledge of his time from experience that he longs to have but cannot reconcile with his modern rationalism, Hardy, when faced with the most shallow and trivial of human activities, has a vicarious sympathy with the nomadic and rootless performers and takes delight in perceiving the ugliness, the suffering, and the witless sense of calamity that exist beneath the grotesque brightness of their external appearances. Moreover, as far as Hardy is concerned, appalling triviality is stronger than religious earnestness. He stays on one occasion at a Temperance Hotel and notes that:

The people who stay here appear to include religious enthusiasts of all sorts. They talk the old faiths with such new fervours and original aspects that such faiths seem again arresting . . . In a street outside I heard a man coaxing money from a prostitute in slang language, his arm around her waist. The outside was a commentary on the inside. (*Early Life*, p. 270).

Hardy's astounding visual illusion when he visits the Moulin Rouge in 1890 is too well known to be quoted yet again, but he never seems to be able to visit any kind of dingy-bright and mindless entertainment without seeing pain and grotesque ugliness. In June 1880 he visits Tayleur's circus at Fordington Field, near Dorchester, and notices that the clowns when off duty possess a 'sub-expression' of 'good-humoured pain'. He notices too the sub-human apathy and docility of such people; at the Trocadero Music Hall, which he visits in 1893, he sees 'the great men — famous performers at the Halls — drinking at the bar in long coats before going on: on their faces an expression of not wishing in the least to emphasize their importance to the world'. At the ballet at the Alhambra he sees 'the air of docile obedience on the faces of some of the dancing women, a passive resignation like that of a plodding

¹ J. O. Bailey in 'Hardy's Mephistophelian Visitants', *P.M.L.A.*, vol. LVIII, p. 1181, connects the circus with Hardy's awareness of evil. He suggests that a possible source of the Mephistophelian figure may be the puppet shows and penny books that Hardy probably saw at fairs and circuses.

horse, as if long accustomed to correction. Also marks of fatigue'. Hardy sees these women when making a round of London music halls in 1890, and other notes that he makes at this time show us that it is an unseemly world. Its triviality is both hypnotic and horrible. There is little human dignity, and those who watch the antics of the performers are themselves debased. Hardy describes them as 'round-hatted young men gaping at the stage, with receding chins and rudimentary mouths'. He notices too how much drunkenness appears in the hectic world, and how 'the character on the stage which always gave the most delight was that of a drunkard imitated'. Sometimes we might think that Hardy sees such people as though they have arisen from the dead. A visit to the Empire Music Hall convinces him that 'the dancing girls are nearly all skeletons. One can see drawn lines and puckers in their young flesh'. They look vaguely old to Hardy, and when — in the same atmosphere of hectic amusement — he goes to see the Derby, the jockeys have a characteristic appearance for the future creator of Little Father Time. They are 'little ghastly men looking half putrid, standing silent and apathetic. . . .'

4

When Mr Walter de la Mare is writing of Hardy's extraordinary sensitivity to a wide variety of visual stimulus, he says: 'It may be convenient to call him a realist . . . a more precise term would be realizationist'.¹ And it is in *Jude the Obscure* that Hardy's child and circus fantasy is realized in its most significant sense.

In the grey everydayness of *Jude the Obscure* those things that in the other novels are visual images or undertones tend to have startling actuality; and this feeling that fantasy is at last quite real is perhaps accentuated by the fact that Jude himself is so ordinary. A. J. Guerard has noticed how nice Jude is, feeling possibly that our acceptance of him differs from our acceptance of Hardy's other heroes. Jude is certainly the least grotesque of all Hardy's great characters, and, as he is the hero of an essentially modern work, the background of his life is easily familiar to the reader. Yet for all that Jude is not by any means commonplace, and when we look closely into the realism on which his character is based we find that it is, of course, of a peculiarly Hardeian kind. For instance, his characteristic immaturity; as a child he resembles Hardy in having no desire to grow up.

As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering,

¹ Walter de la Mare, *Thomas Hardy's Lyrics*. T.L.S. November 27th, 1919
Reprinted in *Private View*, p. 97.

he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it.

If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man. (*Jude the Obscure*, p. 15).

Yet while still a child Jude is in some respects old and, as Hardy says, is 'an ancient man' in some phases of his thought', while remaining 'much younger than his years in others'. When he has grown up Hardy constantly reminds us of his childlike personality; both Arabella and Sue perceive his immaturity, and both in their way take advantage of it. But Sue herself is childlike, and Arabella sees both of them as, 'Silly fools — like two children'. Sue sometimes hints that childhood may be a kind of refuge. She tells Jude, 'I crave to get back to the life of my infancy and its freedom', and, like all Hardy's major characters, they both have any amount of talent for living in their own private worlds.

In some ways Jude's world resembles that of Johnny Nunsuch or Abe Durbeyfield in that it is peopled with shapes, ghosts and odd spectres. On more than one occasion Jude sees ghosts of great men in Christminster, and on his arrival he sees his own ghost walking through the city. Sue tells Jude that, 'Christminster is a place full of fetishists and ghost seers', and as he discusses his scholarly ambitions and religious beliefs, he tells her, 'I am fearful of life, spectre-seeing always'. Sue's private world is concerned with ideas about the organization of modern society, and it reminds us that Jude exists in a typically Hardeian scheme of things. But, unlike Sue, he has no ambition to alter anything. This chaos of modern principles is quite real to Jude, and all he wants to do is to find a place in it as it is. He is a dreamer. His desire to be a scholar and a parson is largely an imaginative achievement; and, except to die in Christminster like many clergymen and dons, he never realizes any of his dream. It remains a glorious vision: and it is a vision that is both sustained and destroyed in the garish atmosphere of Thomas Hardy's special kind of hell.

From childhood Jude has regarded Christminster as the New Jerusalem, and, after great concentration and earnest prayer, he comes to a state of visual delusion in which, in the company of images of childish horrors in the dark, he sees a vision in the sky, and in the air he hears voices calling to him and tempting him with sounds of, 'We are happy here!' Sometimes he sees the city ringed with a halo of subdued light, and everything — the city, the life there, and his own participation in both — is extraordinarily real to him. He has no difficulty in formulating a creed to support his prayers and visions.

'It is a city of light' he said to himself.

'The tree of knowledge grows there,' he added a few steps further on.

'It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to.'

'It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion.'

After this figure he was silent a long while, till he added: 'It would just suit me.' (*Jude the Obscure*, p. 24).

As Jude is musing thus, Hardy tells us that, 'he forgot to feel timid. He suddenly grew older'.

But, not old enough; and this childish, wondering, atmosphere of castles, strong men and unknown places is nourished by strange tales told by strange people. Tales that fascinate and absorb him. Odd fairy-tale characters, travellers, hunchbacks and itinerant quacks and deceivers come into the story to tell Jude tales of Christminster and then most of them disappear and do not come again. One day, when walking along the roadside, Jude meets a simple countryman, a carter, and the man tells him of the beautiful music to be heard in Christminster and of the main street that 'ha'nt another like it in the world'. But he admits that he has never been to Christminster. These are traveller's tales. An old hunchback woman whom Jude chances to meet when endeavouring to decipher Latin inscriptions in local churches also tells him of, 'the romantic charms of the city of light and lore'. But, she is a reader; she has read everything she can lay her hands on, and now tells Jude tales. The city is a legend in the minds of men. Vilbert the quack makes Christminster sound as strange and potent as his own medicines. He talks nonsense about the sons of washerwomen who speak in Latin; he claims to have been there many times; and he deceives Jude in promising to help him. Vilbert makes his first appearance in the story as though he has come from another world. He strides much too quickly over the countryside with 'movements as truly timed as those of the planets in their courses', and his wild fantastic appearance suggests that, puppet fashion, he lives in the air.

Vilbert is an itinerant quack, and Thomas Hardy's interest in the itinerant and nomadic has a very sharp reality in *Jude the Obscure*, where not only do odd figures of child awareness wander into the story to tempt Jude with tales of Christminster but many characters in the novel regard nomadic life as a suitable form of existence. Throughout the book it is the great solver of practical problems. There is a general feeling that when all else fails one can always take to the road and join the hectic and restless half of humanity. When respectable society seems likely to reject Jude, Sue, or Arabella they make their own plans to follow the life of the wanderer. Sue

tells Jude that people will care about the respectability of a baker, 'unless he keeps a cake and gingerbread stall at markets and fairs', and when the time comes she sells cakes at Kennetbridge fair. Arabella, fearing poverty as Jude's health declines, decides that unless better days come she will have to take to itinerant trading by hawking sausage and blackpot. Better days look like coming when she attracts the amorous interest of Vilbert, and Vilbert, as we have seen, is himself a travelling man. Yet, ironically enough, the only real happiness in this dark story is also associated with nomadic life. When Sue is happy with her student friend they go, 'on walking tours, reading tours, and things of that sort', and when Jude and Sue, pursued by scandal and unable even to work, 'enter a shifting, almost nomadic, life', Hardy says it is, 'not without its pleasantness for a time'.

In *Jude the Obscure* Hardy has a great liking for shows, fairs, processions, models, brass bands and other activities easily associated with a childlike awareness of nomadic existence. His liking for models is strange. Not long after their first meeting Sue and Phillotson take a party of schoolchildren to see a model of the city of Jerusalem at an exhibition that is being trailed around the countryside. They meet Jude there, and he is deeply impressed by what he sees. In his childlike way he is quite sure that the model represents a true picture of the city and he tells the sceptical Sue: 'How it carries one back, doesn't it! I could examine it for hours.'

Christminster too has its model. At the height of such prosperity as they attain together Sue and Jude make a beautiful model of Cardinal College and it is exhibited at the Great Wessex Agricultural Show. There crowds may gape at it in wonder and delight as a military band blares away and all the fun of the fair is going on behind them. When their lives are less secure and Sue is selling cakes at Kennetbridge Fair, her gingerbread and other confectionary is very popular because Jude has made the cakes as ingenious little models of Christminster. It is all very reminiscent of what Diggory Venn says about children, and no doubt they like models because they know — the evidence is in front of their very eyes — that there is one Cardinal College, one Christminster and one Jerusalem.

Children also enjoy festive days and processions, and Hardy writes now and again of some very noisy days in Christminster. Jude and Sue return there on Remembrance Day, and it is on such another day that Jude dies. He has indeed come up to Jerusalem for the festival, and he is going to haunt the city after he is dead. Life, death and appalling fantasy all coalesce in a shocking cacophony of nonsense as Jude lies on his deathbed chanting the gloomier pronouncements of Job, when the bells of Christminster are ringing out a gaudy day. It is a day of games, music, dancing and procession;

and the mingled sounds of bells, organ notes and cheering penetrate into the room as undergraduates and dons disport themselves in the various fantastic fancy garb of university antics and appearances. When he is finally overcome by all his difficulties, Jude Fawley leaves a world that is not at all unlike a circus or a fair.

It is also a dark world and full of nightmares, where any child might be afraid. Jude and Sue are all the while encountering obstacles they do not know about and cannot be expected to anticipate. They live in an anonymous world of Kafka-like nightmare as they wander from one community to another, often peopled with unnamed and sometimes unknown persons. And there are policemen everywhere. Such discipline as there is in Hardy's fantasy of the hectic world is that of simple and direct prohibition such as one exercises over small children. Jude's driving of the bread van, his walks through Christminster — both drunk and sober, his visits to shows, and his participation in the life of the crowded city that he loves, all is watched over, and when necessary disciplined and corrected, by the police; and when he is very near to death and sees the ghosts of great scholars and famous men as he walks through Christminster with Arabella, all that she can see is 'a damn policeman'.

Sue and Jude, and even Arabella, are impressed by the authority of the police, but it would seem to mean very little to a body of fantastic nomadic creatures who step out of atmosphere and become actual participants in the drama of *Jude the Obscure*. They are people with strange names, no settled community and age-old tricks to amuse; and they, and they alone, are quite at ease in this tragedy. Hardy tells us that every year they alight on Shaston to spend the winter in the dilapidated old town:

It was the resting-place and headquarters of the proprietors of wandering vans, shows, shooting-galleries, and other itinerant concerns, whose business lay largely at fairs and markets. As strange wild birds are seen assembled on some lofty promontory, meditatively pausing for longer flights, or to return by the course they followed thither, so here, in this cliff-town, stood in stultified silence the yellow and green caravans bearing names not local, as if surprised by a change in the landscape so violent as to hinder their further progress; and here they usually remained all the winter till they turned to seek again their old tracks in the following spring. (*Jude the Obscure*, p. 241).

We are told of these people at a significant point in Jude's story. When Arabella has returned, when Sue and Phillotson are unhappy in their marriage, and Jude himself has given up his fight against the temptation to love Sue. He has also lost his desire to study and is

beginning to lose his religious faith. These nomads are the people who live in the glare, the garish noise, and the rattle, and we are made aware of their actual existence when life for Jude and Sue is at a very low ebb indeed. Then, in a clumsy way, Richard Phillotson does what he can to put things right. He lets Sue go. And in this, the one great independent act of charity in this appalling story, the riff-raff of the booths and tents fight on his side.

Although Phillotson had never spoken to one of these gentlemen they now nobly led the forlorn hope in his defence. The body included two cheap-jacks, a shooting-gallery proprietor and the ladies who loaded the guns, a pair of boxing-masters, a steam-roundabout manager, two travelling broom-makers, who called themselves widows, a gingerbread-stall keeper, a swing-boat owner, and a 'test-your-strength' man. (*Jude the Obscure*, p. 299).

A brisk fight ensues, but, apart from some customary black eyes and bleeding noses, these strange people do not themselves suffer. In a changing universe nothing has overcome the eternal stability of those who wander, and they go on to live out their fantastic comedy in other towns than Shaston. And their gesture is unavailing, all that they can achieve is a kind of idiotic and rather violent farce.

Sue leaves Shaston to join Jude in Aldbrickham, and, quite soon after, Little Father Time comes to them and all their greatest tragedy come with him.

A very old, ancient child, Little Father Time is just himself forming his own impressions 'in the habit of sitting silent, his quaint and weird face set, and his eyes resting on things they did not see in the substantial world'.

PASCAL AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

W. G. MOORE

IN respect of the ancient world we have learned not to be disconcerted at discovering an alliance between religion, poetry and the beginnings of scientific investigation. But we are apt to suppose that in the modern world these things are arranged more neatly. We imagine modern scientific investigation to be generated only among men devoted to scientific enterprises, and that the pedigree of scientific theories and methods of research is uncontaminated by strains of literature and theology. But though this may, in general, be true of the present and is likely to hold for the future, it is certainly not true of the past; and, in particular, it is not true of the so-called 'scientific revolution' which 'overturned the authority in science not only of the middle-ages but of the ancient world . . . [and] ended not only in the eclipse of the scholastic philosophy but in the destruction of Aristotelian physics'.¹ For the first hints (and they were often broad hints) of this revolution, indeed the climate of opinion that made the revolution possible, are often due to writers who have no place in the history of science.

Pascal himself has, of course, an authentic place in this history, and for this reason inquiry into the genesis of his ideas, particularly in relation to the methods of scientific investigation and the character of scientific knowledge, is relevant and illuminating. But it will be found to lead, not only to the world which he inhabited in common with his fellow scientists, but also to his literary and theological studies. For Pascal was a man who touched his world at every point, and whatever he drew from it affected all his interests. In some respects, as I hope to show, he came nearer than his great contemporaries — Bacon and Descartes — to perceiving the path that scientific investigation was to take, and his prescience seems to have sprung from some oddly 'unscientific' sources.

Pascal's scientific achievements have been frequently and illuminatingly described.² So much so that lack of technical knowledge need prevent none of us from knowing something of what he accomplished. His views on scientific method, on the other hand, have received less

¹ Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science*, p. vii.

² Most readably by F. Strowski, *Pascal et son temps*, Plon, 1910, by L. Brunschvicg in *Œuvres de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Hachette, 1908, 3 vols, *Les Grands Ecrivains de la France*, hereafter referred to as G.E., and most recently by P. Humbert, *Cet effrayant génie . . . L'œuvre scientifique de Blaise Pascal*, Albin Michel, 1947.

attention. His disagreement with Descartes was considerable, and he is not to be classed without qualification as a Baconian. Indeed, his brief writings on method show him to have put some of Bacon's emphases in a more modern and indeed more scientific way than Bacon himself was able to do. His most explicit assertions remained unpublished until 1779, so that they were probably unknown to d'Alembert when he was studying Bacon as exponent of the empirical attitude and the inductive method. This is a pity, as he would have found both more clearly and crisply expressed in Pascal. The famous *Discours Préliminaire* of the *Encyclopédie* would itself in that case have probably been a different, and a clearer, document.

Apart from some private letters and a printed account of the experiment on the Puy de Dôme, Pascal's views on method in physics are expressed in a few discarded pages, apparently intended as preface to a treatise on the vacuum. They exist only in what is known as the Guerrier manuscript, and Guerrier left the following note attached to his copy: *J'ai transcrit ceci sur une copie très imparfaite et pleine de lacunes*'. In seventeen short paragraphs, two or three of which are clearly not consecutive, Pascal states his disagreement with contemporary attitudes to physics, particularly its bondage to antiquity. He finds the respect for antiquity among his contemporaries both exaggerated and unreasonable, the latter because it is misplaced; it is tyrannical in spheres where it should be least in evidence, disregarded in those where it should be paramount. In order to show this, he divides the sciences into two categories, those depending on memory and those depending on reasoning. History, geography, jurisprudence, languages and theology all depend (in his view) on what has been written; the complete material for their study is found in the books; they are in a sense complete already. Other sciences, however, depend on the senses and on thought processes, these are incomplete, progress in them is essential and is the work of reason. Such sciences are mathematics (Pascal mentions geometry and arithmetic but not algebra) music, physics and architecture. In all these authority has little to say, reason has much, just as in the first group authority plays a much more important rôle than reason. Pascal accuses his contemporaries of doing precisely the opposite of what the two groups of sciences require. Authority is exalted in physics and held to be of little account in theology. The right way would be to encourage invention in physics and to ban novelty from theology. Thus, in his view, credulity was paralysing physics and scepticism poisoning theology. The secrets of nature are concealed and only revealed progressively as time goes on. As experiments multiply so will their consequences, allowing us to discover things hidden from our forebears. Humanity may be likened to a single man, learning as he grows older. Those we are pleased to call the ancients lived in the

youth of the world. They are to be admired for the consequences they drew from the few principles known to them. It is very natural that they should give explanations which we now know to be wrong. For instance, when they said that diamonds are the hardest substance they meant no more than the hardest known to them. Thus without contradicting them we can assert the contrary of what they asserted, (*sans les contredire nous pouvons dire le contraire de ce qu'ils disaient*). Truth must prevail; even when recently discovered it is older than all opinions.

Even so bald a summary will have shown I think the fascination of such thoughts on scientific method, when we remember they were written in 1647, less than thirty years after the appearance of the *Novum Organum*. This fragment of a preface is an important document in the famous Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns. No contemporary has left anything like so clear a statement of the place of authority in science. Pascal's division of the sciences strikes us as odd. He had clearly no experience in such fields as history and geography, though in his day (and even in Bossuet's) they were authoritarian disciplines. It is perhaps remarkable that he does not consider theology unique as a science but as one of a group.

Any division of the sciences is interesting that dates from 1647. The nearest point of comparison, if we wish to see how far contemporaries were talking the same language, is as already suggested Francis Bacon. The second book of the *De Augmentis* (1605) begins as follows:

The best division of human learning is that derived from the three faculties of the rational soul, which is the seat of learning. History has reference to the Memory, poesy to the Imagination and philosophy to the Reason . . . from these three fountains, Memory, Imagination and Reason, flow these three emanations, History, Poesy and Philosophy; and there can be no others. For I consider history and experience to be the same thing, as also philosophy and the sciences.

(Spedding's Translation, *Works*, IV, 292-3).

This is to a certain extent Pascal's language, and in particular the distinction between memory and reason is common to both writers. This probably came to Pascal indirectly. There is no sign that he actually read Bacon, but it is fairly certain that he read, or talked with people who had read, Jansenius, who, in the *Augustinus* of all places, uses this very distinction. Apart from this, the differences are more striking than the parallels. The thought of Bacon is still obscured by scholastic features of style. Pascal's division is much less pretentious, in that he is considering not kinds of knowledge but actual branches of scientific study. He is in fact speaking our language

much more than Bacon is. As his terms are precise, so his objective is not a general plotting of the chart of knowledge but to make a particular point, observed, delimited, isolated. This is scientific language in the modern sense. His point is the determination of the proper place of authority in the various sciences — a centre of controversy throughout the seventeenth century. The difference from the Baconian procedure is immense. Pascal proceeds here as elsewhere, as a scientist, by delimiting the field to the dimensions of his own practical experience. One could hardly be further from the vast generalizations of Bacon than this precise use of induction, proceeding from actual experiment and rigorous analysis.

But was it not Bacon who first spoke of the unique value of experiment, who defined the inductive method which Pascal is applying? Let us see how far this is so. Bacon's most specific references to induction would seem to be among the aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*:

No. 19: There are and can be only two ways of searching into and discovering truth. The one flies from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from these principles, the truth of which it takes for settled and immovable, proceeds to judgment and to the discovery of middle axioms. And this way is now in fashion. The other derives axioms from the senses and particulars, rising by a gradual and unbroken ascent, so that it arrives at the most general axioms of all last. This is the true way, but as yet untried.

No. 36: . . . we must lead men to the particulars themselves, and their series and order; while men on their side must force themselves for awhile to lay their notions by and begin to familiarize themselves with facts.

No. 82: . . . the true method of experience first lights the candle, and then by means of the candle shows the way, commencing as it does with experience duly ordered and digested, not bungling or erratic, and from it educating axioms, and from established axioms again new experiments. . . .

No. 95: Those who have handled sciences have been either men of experiment or men of dogmas. The men of experiment are like the ant; they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course, it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy. . . .

These passages seem to me to be among the most explicit in the *Novum Organum*, a book which it is impossible to read without

admiring that 'extraordinary elasticity of mind' which Butterfield sees as Bacon's chief characteristic. The empirical method, process by experiment, is constantly suggested, though never precisely defined. When Pascal uses the word 'axiom' we know that he is in line with Euclid and with general usage. But it is far from easy to see what Bacon meant by the word, and even more difficult to grasp the difference between 'general' and 'middle' axioms. This is new thought but still within the scholastic shell.

It is equally hard to find within the *Novum Organum* any clear definition of 'induction'. We are assured that 'true and legitimate' induction is the key to the interpretation of nature, that the inductive process is from experiment to axiom and thence to new experiment. More than this I have not found. There would seem to be some force in the criticism that 'induction' in Bacon's work often stands for 'elimination' (i.e., exhaustive experiment or the exploration of all possible cases), that in fact despite his scorn of Aristotle he has not grasped what that philosopher had to say:

Bacon n'a même pas entrevu en quoi consiste la vraie nature de l'Induction, car il n'a pas compris pourquoi elle peut légitimement conclure de quelques cas bien observés, et même d'un seul, à tous les cas du même genre non observables.¹

Should we not conclude that Bacon's new method, his *novum organum*, really consisted in directing attention to the particular phenomenon, in proclaiming that new results could be obtained by systematic experiment allied to reasoning? Descartes in fact could have called himself a Baconian. He too welcomed experiment, combined with reasoning. The hub of the whole question in the seventeenth century seems to have been, not whether either or both should be used but which should have priority.² On this point Bacon seems silent. Having no skill in actual experiment, he speaks of the whole matter vaguely and theoretically. Descartes, as a mathematician, apparently thought of experiment as ancillary to reason. As Gilson has shown, Harvey convinced him of the circulation of the blood, as Pascal was to convince him of barometric pressure, but he insisted on explaining both these and other phenomena 'according to his principles', that is, giving priority to metaphysics over physics, to categories of thought over observed fact. This led him into strange

¹ G. Sortais, *La Philosophie moderne, depuis Bacon jusqu'à Leibniz*, 1920, I, 374. For other criticisms of Bacon's method, *ibid.*, pp. 370-82.

² Cf. Adamson on Roger Bacon (*Commemoration Essays*, ed. G. Little, O.U.P. 1914, p. 18): 'Not only does Bacon recognize the necessity for experiment, for observation at first hand, but he has a clear appreciation of the true nature of scientific verification . . . he is perfectly aware that . . . conclusions must be tested by comparison with things, must be verified. The function of experimental science is in a word Verification.'

positions, as for example that the heart warms the blood: 'Descartes s'efforce d'expliquer rationnellement un fait qui n'existe pas.'¹

The fact that Pascal never expressed himself at length on the empirical method is the more regrettable in that he had (as Bacon had not) personal experience of successful experiments to guide him and that (like Descartes) he was a mathematician. It is striking that such a man should in physics give priority to experiment over argument. For he does nothing less than this. Such a decisive position was reached in the spirit of Bacon, by rigorous application of a method Bacon seems to have discerned but never succeeded in defining.

It has, I think, escaped notice that Pascal has in mind not two divisions of the sciences but three. Having made the basic point that some sciences depend on memory and others on reason, he refers to the second category as 'sujets qui tombent sous le sens ou sous le raisonnement' and again as 'toutes les sciences qui sont soumises à l'expérience et au raisonnement'.² Of such sciences he gives six examples, as we have seen. Two of them, being branches of mathematics, are not conducted by experiment but by argument. The same was possibly true of two others, music and architecture. In medicine Pascal probably admitted a combination of experiment and reasoning. As regards his final example, physics (the field of knowledge about which he was actually planning the book to which this argument was to serve as preface), he is quite explicit that experiment must have priority over argument. Experiments, he says in so many words, are the *only principles* of physics. He later says with similar clarity that physics is one of those matters 'dont la preuve consiste en expériences et non en démonstrations'.³ From such an author, in such a context, these cannot be unguarded statements. If they are not, their importance is surely immense. Here is the inductive method, as one scholar has said, in its entire perfection. Here is a general position induced from a particular case, not as in mathematics the particular consequences deduced from a general principle.

But we have not yet finished with the assertions of Pascal's fragmentary preface. A sentence, partially quoted already, demands separate treatment:

¹ E. Gilson, *Etudes sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation de système cartésien*, Paris, 1930, p. 83. On the limits of the Cartesian revolt against scholasticism, see the whole of Gilson's second chapter 'Descartes, Harvey et la scolastique', esp. p. 99. 'Pendant que les mathématiques le libèrent de l'influence des anciens dans le domaine des idées, elles l'y exposent d'autre part en l'incitant à déduire a priori dans le domaine des faits.'

² My colleague M. R. Shackleton points out that the 18th *Provinciale* contains a similar triple division of propositions into 'choses surnaturelles . . . propositions non-révélées . . . points de fait,' the first category to be verified by Scripture or Church, the second by reason, the third by 'les sens'.

³ G.E. II, 136, 144.

Car dans toutes les matières dont la preuve consiste en expériences et non en démonstrations on ne peut faire aucune assertion universelle que par la générale enumeration de toutes les parties et de tous les cas différents. C'est ainsi que quand nous disons que le diamant est le plus dur de tous les corps, nous entendons de tous les corps que nous cognossons, et nous ne pouvons ni ne devons y comprendre ceux que nous ne cognossons point.

This is to me a difficult passage. It would seem to suggest that, like Bacon, Pascal, understood by the experimental method an enumeration of all possible cases. But there are two difficulties in the way of such an exegesis. In the first place, the actual work on which this fragment was based was a series of experiments which according to Pascal *entirely* sufficed to establish his point. Before performing the final experiment Pascal wrote in a letter to his brother-in-law as follows:

Vous voyez déjà sans doute que cette expérience est décisive de la question, et que s'il arrive que la hauteur du vif-argent soit moindre au haut qu'au bas de la montagne (comme j'ay beaucoup de raisons pour le croire, quoique tous ceux qui ont médité sur cette matière soient contraires à ce sentiment) il s'ensuyva nécessairement que la pesanteur et pression de l'air est la seule cause de cette suspension du vif-argent, et non pas l'horreur du Vuide . . . (GE. II. 160).

A single experiment, therefore, was sufficient to ruin a maxim of antiquity and to establish its opposite. This alone should make us pause before suggesting that for Pascal induction meant enumeration of all possible cases. Secondly, a clue to his meaning lies to hand in the use of the adjective 'universelle'. Any and every statement about the physical universe is bounded by the known cases; it cannot include cases which may well exist but of which we have as yet no knowledge. Is not Pascal saying that universal statements are impossible in physics, that any statement or 'law' is really only a hypothesis, conditioned by the state of knowledge at the time the pronouncement is made? This would fit in with the scepticism which we know Pascal to have shared.

The positions established in the *Fragment* may thus be claimed to have greater importance than the brevity of their enunciation would lead us to think. In these few pages Pascal, by attacking on the basis of actual experiment the whole question of 'authority' in science, suggests that any authority other than that of experiment itself is out of place in physics, as irrelevant there as it is indispensable in theology. In so doing he has illustrated Bacon's thesis that the way forward in

science is by experiment, but he has done much more than that. He has suggested that the particular is not only the starting-point but the sole principle of physical science, that universal assertions are impossible as long as the physical world is not entirely known to us, that nature has her secrets and that they can be discovered only by particular investigation. To say that by so arguing Pascal has liberated physics would be an understatement. He has given an example of a branch of scientific inquiry in which no principles can be either established beforehand or deduced or revealed; they can only be discovered piecemeal. His unpublished *Fragment* is the first expression of a viewpoint in science which within a hundred years became widely accepted, and which was no longer confined to physics. What Pascal says about physics, Voltaire thinks about knowledge. Diderot, Buffon, even Montesquieu are empiricists: they distrust general assertions, they insist on examining actual cases. Yet the man who seems first to have insisted that, in some branches of human inquiry, cases were the only principles available, that man was no free-thinker but a Christian belonging to an austere and dogmatic sect.

How is this fact to be explained? The evidence suggests that far from being inconsistent with his scientific work, Pascal's Augustinian views were partly the cause of it. He was not a Jansenist and a scientist. He was that sort of scientist because he was a Jansenist, that is in the Augustinian tradition. He liberated physics in order to liberate theology. The unifying thread through the *Fragment* which we are analysing is the right use of authority. Pascal was quite clear that it should be paramount in theology as it should be subservient to discovered fact in physics.

There is, as far as I know, no evidence that Pascal had studied Bacon, but he might well have taken his division of the sciences in part from Jansen's *Augustinus*. Brunschvicg has given several parallels between a whole book of that work, the *Liber proemialis*, 'de ratione et auctoritate in rebus theologicis' and the terms of Pascal's argument. It may be apt to recall that *Augustinus* was published in Louvain in 1640 and that two reprints appeared in Rouen in the 1640s. Pascal's own connection with followers of Jansen dates from 1646, as do his researches into the vacuum. No less than the *Discours de la Méthode*, as Brunschvicg remarks, *Augustinus* represents a rejection of some of the main scholastic positions: 'La concordance des deux ouvrages pour ce qui concerne la condamnation de la Scholastique, est de nature à expliquer la stabilité de l'équilibre spirituel où vécut Pascal de 1646 à 1649, poursuivant avec ardeur le succès de ses recherches scientifiques et attaché avec ferveur à la restauration de la foi suivant Port-Royal'. (GE. II. 132 n.).

We must not, however, imagine Pascal as a lone worker in his

scientific field. We know that he consorted with kindred spirits, such as Auzout, Magni, Le Pailleur, Mersenne. About this last we know much more since the thesis of M. Lenoble. Marin Mersenne wrote a good deal on scientific theory in the 'thirties and continued active interest in new advances right up to his death in 1648. His works contain a complimentary mention of Pascal. It is interesting, therefore, to find such a figure criticizing Bacon and advocating the principle of experiment in physics because in that science the Aristotelian conditions of proof were absent:

La démonstration proprement dite doit partir, comme l'avait dit Aristote, de principes certains. Or les principes de la physique sont cachés. Il n'y a donc pas en physique de démonstration proprement dite. (Lenoble, p. 313).

He discusses the question whether certainty is possible in physics and seems convinced that experiments are the only means of accurate knowledge: 'Nous ne pouvons rien connaître sinon que par des expériences bien réglées et bien faites.'

This is surely very close to Pascal, and we may properly imagine conversations on the vacuum, the respect which should be shown to the ancients, and many other topics. This is the orbit of meditation in which Pascal's *Fragment* was conceived.

Nor need we limit the influence of Mersenne to the matter of experiment. Pascal may well owe to him that new understanding of the rôle of reason in science which is present in the *Pensées* and still awaits special study. In circles such as the one which met in M. Petit's house there seems to have been elaborated what M. Lenoble calls a new, and more strictly scientific conception of science:

On voulait voir se constituer enfin une science certaine, qui serait capable de vaincre le scepticisme par sa modestie même, en se donnant un objet limité, sans doute, mais bien défini et réellement saisissable. Mersenne accomplit parfaitement cette tâche en définissant la raison comme la faculté d'établir des rapports entre des phénomènes et la science comme la connaissance, non des causes métaphysiques et des principes, mais des lois. Or cette définition marque la date de naissance de la physique mécaniste. Dès lors, l'expérience et la raison pourront utilement collaborer pour édifier une science véritable. (Lenoble, 334).

We have moved so far from the position championed by Pascal that it is not even easy to see what it was. He lived in a world where the truths of theology were generally thought to be entirely different in origin from the truths of anything else, because they were supernaturally revealed. This distinction was fundamental to Pascal. He

never gave it up. A note at the end of one of the most famous of the *Pensees* runs: 'Que si les choses naturelles la surpassent, que dira-t-on des surnaturelles?' To anyone convinced of divine truth, any truth that could be found out by human agency was of another inferior order. Were this vital distinction not observed, the discoveries of man could be compared with the revelations of God. To the Augustinian, as to the Calvinist, this was blasphemy, the acme of human pride.

There was no need for strict catholics of Pascal's generation to be told the qualitative difference between theology and the other sciences. Pascal himself had been given recent occasion to emphasize this difference afresh in attacking the Frère Saint-Ange for insisting on greater use of reason in theology. To a religious mind of that day such an attitude was likely to bring the truths of theology on a level with those in fields established by reason, and thus to deny the primacy of revelation. The influence of Augustine was a powerful aid to scepticism as to all 'human' truth and it is perhaps on this line that we shall find the motives of Pascal's scientific views. As Henri Berr wrote over fifty years ago: 'On ne peut comprendre complètement le caractère de la science du 17^e siècle sans la rattacher au scepticisme de cette époque.'¹

There may be no evidence that Pascal read Bacon, but there is abundant evidence that he read Montaigne. In his longest essay, which was itself to supply Pascal with a number of 'cases' for his *Apology*, Montaigne draws heavily on the *City of God*. Dr Abercrombie has noted that Montaigne's

own philosophical scepticism was matched by the readiness of Augustine to admit the limitations of the human intellect . . . This same sceptical attitude of Montaigne led him to embrace a fideistic solution of the problem of Faith and Reason. He would not accept the credentials of the latter but his profession of Christianity withheld him from inquiring into those of the former.²

The two last sentences would, I think, be valid for Pascal also.

The value of all this for the history of science has not, so far as I know, been elucidated. An essay such as the *Apologie de Remond Sebong* contends that authority, other than revealed, has no finality. This means that true certainty and finality, true principles in fact, are possible only in theology. It is no use to speak of 'principles' in other

¹ H. Berr, 'Pascal et sa place dans l'histoire des idées', *Revue de Synthèse historique*, 1900, pp. 158-78.

² N. Abercrombie, *Saint Augustine and French Classical Thought*, O.U.P. 1938, p. 47.

sciences. This is magnificently expressed in a paragraph which may have had a good deal to do with forming Pascal's attitude to science:

En cette pratique et negotiation de science nousavons pris pour argent contant le mot de Pythagoras, que 'chaque expert doit estre creu en son art' . . . chasque science a ses principes presupposez par où le jugement humain est bridé de toutes parts. Si vous venez à choquer cette barrière en laquelle gist la principale foiblesse et fauceté, ils ont incontinent cette sentence en la bouche, qu'il ne faut pas debattre contre ceux qui nient les principes! Or n'y peut-il avoir des principes aux hommes, si la Divinité ne les a revelez: de tout le demeurant, et le commencement et le milieu et la fin, ce n'est que songe et fumée. A ceux qui combatent par presupposition il leur faut presupposer au contraire le mesme axiome de quoy on debat; car toute presupposition humaine, et toute enunciation, a autant d'autorité que l'autre, si la raison n'en faict la difference.¹

For a man who thinks like this, scholastic arguments have lost their hold. For those who read him, the so-called assertions of ancient sciences will seem valuable just so far as 'la raison fait la difference' between them; they will have no inherent validity. This is the spirit that will enable Harvey to disprove the existence of 'spirits' in the blood, and Pascal to disprove nature's horror of a vacuum. So that Montaigne is here clearing the ground for the experimental method by showing that assertions of general validity are impossible outside theology. He, and not Bacon, is the indispensable precursor. His thought finds apt illustration in the very controversies that engaged Pascal. Answering the Père Noel, Pascal mocks at his frequent use of the verb 'presupposer':

... en ce temps où un si grand nombre de personnes sçavantes cherchent avec tant de soing quelle matière remplit cet espace, que cette difficulté agite aujourd'hui tant d'esprits, j'aurois peine à croire que pour apporter une solution si désirée à un si grand et si juste doute vous ne donnassiez autre chose qu'une matière, dont vous presupposez non seulement les qualitez mais encore l'existence mesme; de sorte que qui presupposera le contraire, tirera une conséquence contraire aussi nécessairement. Si cette façon de prouver est receue, il ne sera plus difficile de resoudre les plus grandes difficultez. Et le flux de la mer et l'attraction de l'aymant deviendront aysez à comprendre, s'il est est permis de faire des matières et des qualitez exprez.' (G.E. II. 95).

It could I think be shown at length that in the first half of the seventeenth century thinkers in various fields participate in a general move-

¹ Montaigne, *Essais*, II, 12, Jouaust ed., IV, 51.

ment of critical reassessment. As scientists they make observations, as moralists they analyse behaviour, but common to all would be this acuteness of inquiry into the confident assertions of the traditionalists. The call for new principles and methods in science becomes the more insistent as in one case after another tradition is proved erroneous or doubtful. What have been treated with respect as 'principles' are seen to be 'notions', or subtle explanations showing more ingenuity of thought than actual understanding of phenomena. Even of Descartes it has been said that 'he worried much less about establishing a fact than about its explanation'.¹

Pascal has himself provided the best example of this dissolving process in recounting his own approach to the problem of the vacuum. Reflecting upon his own and other experiments, he asks why that of Torricelli in particular has not been more favourably received:

Neanmoins la force de la prevention fit encore trouver des objections qui lui ostèrent la croyance qu'elle meritoit. Les uns dirent que le haut de la sarbatane estoit plein des esprits de Mercure; d'autres, d'un grain d'air imperceptible rarefié; d'autres, d'une matière qui ne subsistoit que dans leur imagination; et tous, conspirans à bannir le vuide, exercent à l'envi cette puissance de l'esprit qu'on nomme Subtilité dans les Escoles, et qui pour solution des difficultez veritables ne donne que des vaines paroles sans fondement. Je me resolus donc de faire des expériences si convainquantes qu'elles fussent à l'espreuve de toutes les objections qu'on y pourroit faire. . . (G.E. II. 59).

All this is quite in the spirit of the dissolving acidic criticism of Montaigne. And we know the end of the story, for Pascal. His further soundings into what actually takes place and into what is actually verifiable led him (still in keeping with Montaigne) to the view that only the particular, the partial, could be discovered, something of relative and restricted value. This is surely what he meant when he said that in physics there were no principles, there were only experiments. But in so doing was he not doing much more than pointing out, as Brunschvicg suggests, that physics is a science of fact;² Roger Bacon might well have said that. He is denying general principles, unless they can be induced from particular cases. This I have not found in Montaigne. He was not sufficient of an experimenter to have reflected on the right use of data. But it is clear that after Pascal has written his *Fragment* the door is wide open towards induction and empirical methods. Who opened it? Bacon, no doubt.

¹ Butterfield, op. cit., p. 100.

² Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. Brunschvicg, p. 78 n.

Torricelli,² Galileo and many others helped, but Montaigne most of all by his general attack on the scholastic positions, and Pascal himself, as a reader of Montaigne and Jansenius no less than as a pupil of Torricelli and Fermat. The shortest way of putting the matter might be to say that the empirical method was implicit in Montaigne and became explicit in Pascal.

THE DECEPTIVE TASK OF POLITICAL THEORY

C. B. MACPHERSON

THE remarks which follow do no more than raise a question which might if pursued help to explain the paradox that an age in which fundamental political issues crowd upon us has yet produced no Hobbes or Bentham, no Locke or Hume. The question with which I begin, and with the implications of which the paper is largely concerned, is whether the well-known distinction Marx made between 'classical' and 'vulgar' political economy has any parallel in political theory and can illuminate in any way the position of modern political thought.

It will be well to start by looking at the real point of the distinction Marx made in political economy: there was more than name-calling in the epithet 'vulgar'. The distinction (*Capital*, vol. I, trans. Moore and Aveling, pp. xxii-xxiv, 52 n. 2) was briefly this. Classical political economy, stretching from Petty to Ricardo, 'investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society'; it was, within its limits (the limits of the bourgeois horizon) genuinely scientific, seeking to establish laws of value and laws of distribution of the social product. It recognized increasingly (notably in the case of Ricardo) the difference and even antagonism of class interests. It knew that the state was needed to maintain coercively the institutions of property which made possible this economy with its class distribution of productive effort and of the whole product.

'Vulgar economy' (McCulloch, J. S. Mill, *et seq.*) is described as dealing with appearances only, ruminating on the materials provided by scientific economy in search of 'plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena, for bourgeois daily use'. It replaced genuine scientific inquiry with either 'the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetic', or (among those 'who still claimed some scientific standing and aspired to be something more than mere sophists') 'a shallow syncretism of which John Stuart Mill is the best representative', which 'tried to harmonize the Political Economy of capital with the claims, no longer to be ignored, of the proletariat'.

The change, then, is from disinterested inquiry to apologetics or syncretism. The change came, according to Marx, after 1830 and more especially after 1848. The reason assigned for the change was the emergence of a class-conscious proletariat coinciding with the final establishment of bourgeois political power. It was not simply that this put the bourgeoisie on the defensive intellectually; it was

more that the actual change in society made it impossible for bourgeois thinkers either to stay honestly and clearly within the old assumptions or to abandon them. 'In so far as Political Economy remains within [the bourgeois horizon], in so far, i.e., as the capitalist régime is looked upon as the absolutely final form of social production, instead of as a passing historical phase of its evolution, Political Economy can remain a science only so long as the class-struggle is latent or manifests itself only in isolated or sporadic phenomena.' With Ricardo, 'the science of bourgeois economy had reached the limits beyond which it could not pass'.

We may disregard here Marx's scorn for 'the miserable McCulloch' and his contempt for the 'hired prizefighters'. The important point is contained in his assertion that political economy could remain a science, while staying within the limits of the assumption that capitalist relations were the ultimate form of social relations, only as long as the class antagonism in those relations was latent or only sporadically manifested. Political economy could, that is to say, recognize an element of class antagonism in the system and still regard the economy as a determinate system suitable for scientific analysis, as long as it could regard the antagonisms as fixed or equilibrated and incapable of altering the whole system. In the second place, political economy could be impartial, i.e., untroubled about the moral values of the system it was examining, as long as the system appeared to be absolutely given by the very nature of things. In these circumstances, and only in these, could analysis proceed unmoved either by a need to justify or to denounce. (It was in fact usually assumed that the system carried its own moral justification because it was shown to be a reflection of a rational natural order; but the point here is that, on the assumption that it was the final and irreplaceable form of economic society, moral judgment had no place.)

Hence, the effect of 1830 and 1848, of Sismondi and Proudhon, of Thompson and Hodgskin, was to make it impossible for political economy to regard classes as part of a system in equilibrium. The political economists could therefore neither continue on the evidence to regard the prevailing economy as the final form, nor continue to treat it impartially in the sense just described. In other words the economy could no longer be handled scientifically as a permanent and determinate system. Yet while political economy could not go any further on the assumption that capitalist relations were the final form of social relations, at the same time the economists could not abandon that assumption without abandoning their whole conception of the world. That they could not do, either because they were so immersed in it, or because to have done so would have been, by this time, to have ranged themselves morally against the system they

knew and were strongly attached to. So the material of classical political economy (the economic relations of production and distribution of a capitalist society) had from then on to be dealt with in a less scientific way: economics became apologetics or a search for terms of accommodation between the old theory and the new facts which could not be fitted into it. Or else the economists had to abandon inquiry into that material and take to more superficial inquiry: if classes destroyed the vision of equilibrium, it was classes that had to go and equilibrium be kept.

Hence the move to the syncretism of J. S. Mill, and subsequently (it may be added) to marginal utility, which avoided the range of problems classical theory had been concerned with and served to prevent the basic processes of creation and social distribution of wealth being seen at all, thus creating an intellectual atmosphere unreceptive to anti-capitalist analysis.

Is there in this any insight applicable to the development of modern political theory? Insofar as the change from classical to vulgar political economy was a change from scientific inquiry to justification (apologetics), no parallel change in political theory might be expected, for political theory in the great tradition has always been justificatory. Looked at more closely, however, this difference between political economy and political theory is not absolute, not a difference in the nature of two kinds of thought, but conditional on the way in which each, during any phase of its development, is related to the society in which and for which it is written.

This point is of some importance. Classical political economy was at the same time a scientific explanation, and a justification, of a certain economic and social system. The explanation of 'the system of natural liberty' was itself a vindication of it, in the circumstances; to explain the system was to demonstrate its superiority to the previous system in liberating man by increasing his ability to dominate his natural environment. As long as there was no realistically conceivable successor to that system, scientific explanation was justification. Only when a possible successor appeared was there a logical divorce between explanation and justification. There is, therefore, on this score, no absolute difference which would render a parallel development in political theory out of the question.

Another obstacle to parallel development appears to confront us. In order to have vulgar political economy there had to be something to vulgarize. There had to be a body of scientific theory of which something plausible could be made for apologetic purposes, or which was capable of being transformed into theory more superficial but inheriting the scientific mantle of the classical theory. Was there any such corpus of political theory by the middle of the

nineteenth century? I think that the whole liberal tradition from Locke (or Hobbes) through to Bentham and James Mill can be so regarded. True, almost all these theorists were plainly and consciously justifying or advocating some political system, some kind or limits of political obligation. Yet a political theory may be scientific at the same time as justificatory. The great question political theorists seek to answer may be put in either of two ways: what sort of state ought men to obey? or, what sort of state is most congruous with the nature of man, most in conformity with man's needs and capacities? A political theory may be called scientific insofar as it seeks to deduce the desirable or right kind and degree of political obligation from the nature of man, and insofar as its view of the nature of man is based on inquiry as scientific as is possible within the prevailing limits of knowledge and vision.

The great tradition from Hobbes through Locke, Hume, Burke and Bentham, does meet these standards. It makes up a corpus of classical theory, an essentially utilitarian theory of political obligation based on postulates of human nature which, within the limits of the then bourgeois vision, were profound. The limit of bourgeois vision with respect to political theory lay, not in the assumption of classical political economy (that capitalist production is the final form), but in the assumption that bourgeois human nature is the final form (or, more usually, the universal form except for some supposed primitive age) of human nature. The central assumption of this 'classical' political theory was eminently suitable to the bourgeois society and state; the theory was therefore honestly and solidly scientific about the material it was dealing with. Within the limits of its vision it studied the real relations of political society.

If this view of the English tradition of political theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries be allowed, the possibility of 'classical' political theory being vulgarized is clear enough, and it is open to us to inquire whether it can properly be said to have been vulgarized, and whether its characteristics were conducive to its vulgarization when the circumstances changed. I shall suggest that both of these questions are to be answered in the affirmative, and that the usual view of the development from the seventeenth to the twentieth century points in that direction and, with a slight shift of emphasis, gives that result.

It is a commonplace that the chief characteristic of the liberal tradition from Hobbes to Bentham was its individualism, and the development from John Stuart Mill through Idealism and Pluralism to the neo-Idealism of Barker and Lindsay is often interpreted as a series of attempts to correct the defects of this individualism. The tendency of this interpretation is to attribute the defects mainly to the extreme Benthamite variety of individualism, or even to that

caricature of Benthamite *laissez-faire* which Professor Lionel Robbins has lately exposed.¹ It is perhaps more illuminating to say that the same individualist assumption goes right back to Hobbes and Locke, that it was the strength of the liberal theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (when it corresponded with the social reality), and became the defect of that theory about mid-nineteenth century (when it ceased to do so).

It will be convenient to call the assumption 'possessive individualism'. It amounts roughly to this. (1) Man, the individual, is seen as absolute natural proprietor of his own capacities, owing nothing to society for them. Man's essence is freedom to use his capacities in search of satisfactions. This freedom is limited properly only by some principle of utility or utilitarian natural law which forbids harming others. Freedom therefore is restricted to, and comes to be identified with, domination over things, not domination over men. The clearest form of domination over things is the relation of ownership or possession. Freedom is therefore possession. Everyone is free, for everyone possesses at least his own capacities. (2) Society is seen, not (as it had been) as a system of relations of domination and subordination between men and classes held together by reciprocal rights and duties, but as a lot of free equal individuals related to each other through their possessions, that is, related as owners of their own capacities and of what they have produced and accumulated by the use of their capacities. The relation of exchange (the market relation) is seen as the fundamental relation of society. Finally (3) political society is seen as a rational device for the protection of property, including capacities; even life and liberty are considered as possessions, rather than as social rights with correlative duties.

All this is to be found in Locke; indeed Hobbes went even further than Locke in making man a commodity with an exchange value, but he saw too clearly that domination over things was domination over men, and vice versa, which is perhaps why he is not to be counted entirely in the liberal tradition. Possessive individualism was the predominant assumption of English political thinking from Locke until, say, James Mill. This was the period of the solid establishment of capitalism, when the whole society was recast in market relations, a greatly enlarged working class was created in dependence on the sale of its labour, production was enormously expanded, and unlimited possibilities appeared. In these circumstances, theories built on the assumptions of possessive individualism could be, as I have said, substantially scientific within the limits of their vision.

¹ Lionel Robbins, *The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy*.

The limits were there, but were, for the time being, unimportant. Thus, the position that society consisted of free market relations had a real though limited and partial validity: real, because all relations were increasingly being reduced to the market; partial, because the market relation was not a free one but concealed class domination. Similarly, the position that freedom was domination over things had a real though partial validity: real, in that capitalism was enormously increasing man's productive capacity and thereby his freedom from the limits of scarcity; partial, in that each individual was not being made more free from the domination of other men. While there was no alternative system of production or of social relations in view, the limited and partial character of both these positions was not visible; indeed it is anachronistic to call them limited.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the limitations of these assumptions became apparent. The continuing extension of the capitalist market economy had brought more people more completely into dependence on the sale of their one possession (their capacity to labour). The view that social relations were essentially *free* relations of the market, and that individual freedom was domination of things, became untenable, for the market had clearly created a dominant and a subservient class, and freedom for the former was domination over the latter.

What made a change in the classical political theory possible and necessary was not simply that the development of society had made the old assumptions invalid, but that the same development had produced a working class with some class-consciousness, some organization, and some theories of alternatives to capitalist relations (Chartism, Owenism, etc.). Working-class consciousness, we may say, both made the old theory invalid and made it obvious that it was invalid.

We seem to have here a substantial parallel to the position Marx found in political economy in 1848. I think we may say that 'classical' political theory reached, with Bentham and James Mill (somewhat as political economy reached with Ricardo) the limits beyond which it could not pass. Bentham and James Mill drew out the full consequences, for the theory of government, of the 'classical' postulate of possessive individualism. They were the last who could do so scientifically; critiques ranging from Carlyle's to the Christian Socialists', and the practical critiques of Chartism and other working class movements, made that evident. The threat of mass democratic politics on the Continental model was never entirely absent from the English political mind after 1848.

From about 1848, therefore, it was to be expected that the direction and quality of English political thinking should undergo a marked change. Whether it should be called vulgarization is

perhaps a matter of taste, but the subsequent development of theory suggests that the process was of that nature. We need not impute bad faith; to do so would be palpably absurd in the case of the leading figures. But we do, I suggest, everywhere find syncretism—the essence of honest vulgarization—in the form of attempts to abandon possessive individualism while maintaining bourgeois values, or attempts to reconcile bourgeois individualism with social democracy. These attempts increasingly involved the thinkers' concealing from themselves the fundamental nature of the problem.

Thus John Stuart Mill exhausted himself in seeking ways of patching up the contradictions between liberalism and social democracy, though quite explicitly denying a democratic franchise. Bagehot would find disguises for the problem by increasing the apparatus of deference. T. H. Green rejected possessive individualism but, unwilling or unable to see what it was that had made it untenable (i.e., the appearance of the possibility of a class-based social democracy), went to the concept of the Greek city-state for a pattern. The tendency of Idealism as a whole was to disguise from itself, and so divert attention from, the class basis of political problems. The Idealists' concept of the state as a moral idea rather than a Benthamite mechanism appears as the crowning concept of a chain of thought starting from a moral rejection of class conflict and class political action, arguing that the frustration of humanity was due to faulty political concepts, and finding the remedy in instilling into the political structure a more rounded concept of the state, which would recognize and embrace the claims of society as well as of the individual.

Pluralism had (and has) socialist advocates but its influence has not been confined to socialist ranks, and its effect has been to turn social thought away from class by emphasizing the multiplicity and moral value of group life. Finally, what may be called neo-Idealism, which appears now to prevail in English political theory, carries forward the tendencies of both Idealism and Pluralism. The essential problem, it is said, is to get the right relation between the authority of the state and spontaneous (moral) group life. This again neglects or leaves concealed or overshadowed the problem of getting men clear of the class relations of the market.

This neglect in political theory is matched in the 'objective' political science with which so many of us are mainly concerned. Insofar as political science does not cut itself entirely away from problems of value, and refuse to go beyond mechanics, it commonly is concerned with the rationale of the liberal-democratic system of government. This is generally presented as a matter of a state whose function is to equate the supply of political goods with the competing demands of the many diverse, shifting and overlapping groups which

between them comprise what is significant in political society. This view of the state appears to be a reflection of neo-Idealism. Or perhaps it is more fitting to say that both are unconsciously a new kind of reflection of the market into political theory, in which associations rather than individuals compete for expression and satisfaction and in which the state, ideally, lets them find their own equilibrium or helps them to find the highest equilibrium. The desire for flexibility and fluidity comes at a time when the economy is becoming more monopolistic and rigid: even the relations of the market seem desirable in retrospect when the old free market has itself disappeared.

This is, of course, only one way of looking at the trend of the last century in political theory, but it has, I suggest, some value in pointing to one characteristic which may be thought fundamental. If the adequacy of a political theory is to be assessed by the penetration of its analysis of human nature, it may be allowed that there has been nothing of classic quality in the liberal tradition since Bentham: narrow as the view of human nature prevailing from Hobbes to Bentham has since appeared to be, it was a penetrating analysis of the human nature which had been produced by the society they knew. A reason why there has been nothing of comparable quality since Bentham now suggests itself: that is, that *pari passu* with the emergence of a conscious and articulate working class which has had to be taken into account, and which has developed unorthodox ideas about human needs and capacities, it has become impossible to make politically meaningful statements about human nature as such, with anything like the previously possible degree of scientific validity. It has become necessary to recognize a class difference in human nature, or at least in concepts of human nature.

But this is just what could not be fully admitted to the minds of liberal thinkers, for it leads to the revolutionary view, common to the eighteenth-century democrats, the utopian socialists, the Marxists, and various agrarian movements, that in order to have democracy human nature must be changed, and changed by 'the people', under a new sort of leadership, taking things in their own hands. This view has been consistently rejected by liberal theory, and (possibly in part because of this) its proponents have become increasingly anti-liberal, so that the gulf between liberal-democratic and mass-democratic concepts and movements has widened. The possibility of recognizing, with any hopefulness, the potentialities of a mass transformation of human nature, recedes. Liberal hope (or despair) puts human nature out of sight or seeks ways to infuse it gradually with higher moral qualities.

Thus what might be called a class differentiation in the understanding of human needs and capacities may be said to have played

the same part in the development of political theory as the class differentiation in the view of possible economic relations played in the development of political economy. Abstinence and marginal utility replaced the classical labour theory of value; deference, Pluralism and Idealism supplanted the classical utilitarian rationalist theory of political obligation.

What then, to come to the title of the paper, is the deceptive task of political theory? A thorough inquiry along the lines sketched here might, I think, show that the task of political theory for something like the last hundred years has been necessarily self-deception. I am suggesting that, setting aside the mere propagandists as outside the range of our central concern here, the solid political theorists in the liberal tradition have been compelled to deceive themselves, to the extent that they have seen beyond the limitations of that possessive individualism which was the core of the liberal tradition in its formative years.

That limitation of vision was fairly constant, and its acceptance was increasing, during the first great developing phase of bourgeois society; from Locke to James Mill the assumption of possessive individualism came to be held and stated more and more consciously. Yet the same extension of capitalist relations which encouraged and for a time rendered scientific the analysis based on this assumption, was producing a new class consciousness. The appearance of this new phenomenon, I have argued, made the assumption less valid, removed the scientific character of analysis made on that assumption, and finally made it intellectually impossible for theorists (while remaining liberal and humane) to stay within the assumption. And the same phenomenon made it almost impossible for them to depart entirely from the assumption, for the class which challenged the assumption denied, by its very existence and aspirations as a conscious class, the validity or superiority of the liberal values. Over the whole span of three hundred years of liberal society and thought, the deceptive task of political theory appears to vary inversely as the limitation of bourgeois vision and directly as the extent of the apprehended threat to liberal values.

BOOK REVIEWS

Pioneers of English Education, edited by A. V. Judges. *Faber, 25s. net.*
 British Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 1, No. 1. *Faber, 10s. net.*

Pioneers of English Education contains a series of lectures given at King's College, London, on seven English educationists of the nineteenth century — Robert Owen, Bentham and James Mill, Kay-Shuttleworth, Matthew Arnold, Cardinal Newman, Herbert Spencer, and W. E. Forster. Each is dealt with by a different lecturer and the series is prefaced by a lecture from Sir Philip Morris on 'The English Tradition in Education' and concluded by one from Sir John Maud on 'The Twentieth Century Administrator'. A long introduction by the editor contrives to weave into a connected narrative the salient themes of each lecture, and to provide some of the general historical background of the period. It is well-written, and it is one of the best parts of the book.

Nearly all the lecturers are well-qualified to speak on their subjects: their lectures are of a high standard and they will appeal to a variety of tastes. Professor Pattison brings literary judgment to his account of Matthew Arnold, and he places Arnold's educational work in the context of his literary thought and achievements. Mr Beales is clearly well-informed on Newman, and he shows a mature understanding of his philosophy. Professor Lauwers is lively and stimulating on Spencer, and Mr Armytage's lecture on W. E. Forster is important because it is in part based upon new material. Professor Judges is a polished and sympathetic interpreter of Kay-Shuttleworth.

Somewhere in the book, Professor Judges remarks that 'it is not for the historian . . . to speak with contempt of the motives of the different parties, but rather to try to understand why well-intentioned people acted as they did'. Two of the lectures in this book fall below the standard of the rest mainly because they disregard this principle of sound historical writing. Professor M. V. C. Jeffreys is ill at ease in expounding Robert Owen, and he does not pretend to be in sympathy with his subject. He offers nothing new, either in interpretation or in information. His comments are marred by his preoccupation with Owen's agnosticism, and his lecture is more an account by a Christian apologist than by an historian. Thus, in arguing (pp. 79-80) that 'Owen's great mistake was that he believed that it was necessary only to behold truth in order to pursue it — that, as Plato thought, virtue is a function of knowledge', Professor Jeffreys asserts that this is the fundamental error of not recognizing the existence of original sin. But the concept of sin is surely a theological idea and to apply it to a point in moral philosophy is misleading, especially if the reader infers from it that this particular criticism of Owen depends logically upon a certain theological position, for many others besides Christians would agree that a knowledge of the Good did not necessarily produce a sense of duty. On the other hand, Plato's position is more subtle than Professor Jeffreys seems to realize, and it is not to be met with arguments on quite so superficial a plane as these are. It is, indeed, a recurrent characteristic of this lecture that it tries to deal with important philosophical points without analysis. When discussing Owen's extreme environmentalism, Professor Jeffreys remarks that such a position must deny moral responsibility altogether. But what does this mean? If our characters are formed for us, does it necessarily follow that every action of ours is predetermined, that free choice does not exist? Conversely, if we have free choice of individual actions, can it be argued that we have no moral responsibility for our actions?

The lecture by Dr Hans on 'Bentham and the Utilitarians' is open to more serious criticism. Dr Hans is evidently unfamiliar with the MSS. evidence on his

subject: he also obviously dislikes Bentham, whom he accuses of having no moral sense, no taste, and, on very dubious evidence, of advocating infanticide and homosexuality. This prejudice upsets Dr Hans's historical judgment throughout his lecture. On page 86, he asserts that 'by their negative attitude towards religion' Bentham and his followers 'alienated their nonconformist allies and gave an excuse for the defensive position taken up by the High Church party' (over education). But the evidence does not support this assertion. Bentham personally took little part in the sectarian conflict over education, though James Mill and Place did. In 1814 shortly after Mill's article 'Schools for All' — an attack on the Church — Bentham publicly acknowledged his debt to the enemy camp, in a reference to Bell's 'Elements of Tuition' in his *Chrestomathia*. Nor is it true, as Dr Hans asserts (p. 101), that 'in due course they [the Utilitarians] came to blows [with the dissenters] about the reading of the Bible and . . . had to retreat from their purely secular position and to accept undenominational Christianity as the basis for moral instruction'. Mill and Place never opposed undenominational Christianity in schools: indeed they publicly advocated it. In the West London Lancasterian Association, the quarrel between the Utilitarians and the dissenters was not over whether the Bible should be read, but whether it should be the only thing read. Some but not all of the dissenters insisted that it should, and on this issue, amongst others, the Utilitarians withdrew. It is worth noticing that the Utilitarians were only pleading for what was in fact done elsewhere: in the Sheffield Lancasterian school a flourishing school library was established. It is also to be noted that Mill was not without support among the dissenters: William Allen remained for long after this a firm and friendly ally.

From page 95 onwards Dr Hans turns to James Mill and commences with a major misinterpretation of a sentence of his essay: 'Mill is very cautious,' he writes, 'in his definition of happiness, and leaves it "undetermined".' He even considers the possibility of intellectual as well as moral forms 'which can by no means be resolved into the grosser elements of the senses'.' On this basis, Dr Hans asserts that Mill 'accepted spiritual pleasures as superior (in quality) to sensual ones'. But this is not at all what Mill meant in this passage. His essay was an article for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and he is here describing the philosophical views of his opponents — the context makes this perfectly clear. And it is quite clear, from both published works and unpublished sources, that Mill was a hedonistic Utilitarian and that he accepted no *qualitative* distinction between pleasures, arguing that what appeared to be a superior quality of pleasure could always be reduced to a superior quantity of pleasure. As to Mill's vagueness about the definition of happiness, there are other possible explanations of this, more consistent with the evidence on Mill's views.

Criticism of particular points should not, however, obscure the fact that the book as a whole is good: it contains much more substance, both in information and in mature and well-informed criticism, than is usual in a collection of lectures. It is to be warmly commended to the student of education and as a useful addition to the cultural history of the nineteenth century.

The *British Journal of Educational Studies* is a half-yearly journal for the publication of substantial articles in all branches of research in education. Such a journal has been needed for a long time and this first number devotes part of its space to surveys of research so far done, and to an account of organizations sponsoring such research. There are also a number of articles: the most important is one by Professor L. A. Reid on 'Education and the Map of Knowledge' — a philosophical discussion of different meanings of the word 'knowledge', of different means of communicating knowledge, and of some points in the process of knowing. This article brings to the surface some of the unspoken and unanalysed assumptions which lie behind all discussions about education, especially discussions about the curriculum; it opens up a field of educational

inquiry hitherto neglected in England. The new journal is also to be welcomed for its reviews, which are lengthy and authoritative.

W. H. BURSTON

J. H. OLDHAM: *Life Is Commitment*. S.C.M. Press. 12s. 6d. net.

It is sometimes said that the conflict between 'science' and 'religion' is a thing of the past. Admittedly the tempers both of scientists and of divines have cooled since the ding-dong days of Huxley and Wilberforce, and their dogmatics are less blatant and totalitarian. Nevertheless a cold war continues and there is no present prospect of final peace. Nor is this altogether to be regretted. Peace can be bought at too high a price. For example, if the divine urges that there is no real ground for conflict because he is concerned with the world of spirit and his language is non-scientific, he may be hinting at an important truth, but he courts the danger of cutting away the natural roots of human life while continuing to talk and behave exactly as before the trouble started. What is more, the scientist for his part may accept the proposal of two such spheres of influence because he is left to his own devices at the sacrifice to his opponent of what to him is but a shadow-world of the imagination. Consequently, as is now so often the case, scientist and divine drift apart and the last vestige of a common meeting-place vanishes. Where there is no commonly accepted language there is no room either for agreement or for conflict.

The onus of breaking through this impasse lies with the divine. It is clear, at any rate in principle, what the scientist is about, and the fruits of his labours are such that nobody in his right mind would wish to be deprived of them. He is giving us the power to control the world in which we live to an extent undreamed of only a few years ago. He measures and experiments, and by such methods he makes available a highly valuable and generally useful body of knowledge. His work is sustained by and itself helps to sustain a spirit of impersonal and objective inquiry.

Trouble occurs when these methods are applied to human problems. They are at the best incomplete and at the worst disastrous. Applied to God they fail to find any object at all; and because scientific language can well do without the word 'god', it frequently happens that the scientist believes that he himself can well do without God. Can he in any way be shown to be mistaken?

Dr Oldham starts from the fact that 'there are multitudes for whom the word "God" has lost all meaning whatsoever', and asserts that 'the first thing that needs to be done is to establish communication'. How does he set about it?

He begins by suggesting that there is a whole vitally important area of human experience which is not open to study by the objective methods of the natural sciences. A man thinks, loves, makes friends and decisions, and so on. The story told by the scientist, however close his observations, is not the whole story. A man's *existence*, to use a now popular jargon, is more than his *behaviour*. Moreover, he exists, not as an individual, but in an inescapable relation to other men. 'The Kiss' is a more adequate symbol of human existence than 'The Thinker'!

So far there is little or nothing to which a humanist might take exception. It is the next step where Christian parts company from non-Christian. Granted that man has longings and hopes and loves and commitments which raise him above the status of a mere object, are these just oddities in a fundamentally strange and hostile universe, or is there some power or person which evokes and sustains them? Is human existence ultimately a dialogue of response in which humility and hope are recognized as virtues, or is it only a monologue sustained by proper pride and fortitude against a backcloth of despair? Here is the gulf which divides the faithful from the unfaithful. Here a man is called to make a far-reaching decision.

It is clear that for Dr Oldham the decision is simplified — although the accompanying problems are increased — by his belief that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. 'It may well be that He, as Professor Donald Baillie has said, is "the sole way in which the Christian conception of God becomes credible or even expressible".' Dr Oldham does not shirk the many problems which arise from such a belief. His purpose is to state them as fairly and accurately as he sees them, and then to show how they have not proved for him insuperable obstacles to faith. He goes on to speak of the Church — 'Christianity has no meaning for me whatsoever apart from the Church, but I sometimes feel as though the Church as it actually exists is the source of all my doubts and difficulties' — and also of some of the practical problems which face Christians in the world of compromise and imperfection in which they live.

This is a book which combines intellectual vigour with charity and compassion. It is the outcome of careful reading and reflection, and although Dr. Oldham disclaims originality in material the impress of a finely judicial mind is never far to seek. We have here a reasoned testimony to the faith by which the writer lives, and he invites us to follow him along one road by which a man might come to the vantage-point which he himself now occupies. The book will please neither the dogmatic atheist nor the dogmatic Christian, for it treads too softly for their heavy-footed liking; but to those who do not yet seem to themselves to possess all truth and knowledge it will appeal strongly. Dr Oldham stands within the main stream of Christian tradition, but he is liberal enough (might one say Christian enough?) to wish to talk with and not at others who are unable to share his faith. Professor H. A. Hodges wrote not long ago that 'the Christian task today is to make Christianity visible, intelligible and desirable'. Dr Oldham has taken a stride along this path.

PETER BAELZ

MARVIN MUDRICK: *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*. Princeton University Press, £1 12s. 6d. net.

Mr Mudrick's thesis, according to the publisher's advertisement, is that irony is the vital principle of Jane Austen's novels, 'first used as her defense against involvement in deeper feeling', and then gradually becoming 'the force which liberated her for new explorations into her art'. The idea is not altogether new, but the thoroughness with which it has been worked out is exemplary. Mr Mudrick immediately disassociates himself from 'self-glorifying impressionistic picking-at à la Woolf and Forster, and nostalgic latter-day enshrinements of the author as the gentle-hearted chronicler of Regency order'. On the other hand, 'to Mr Brower's incidental pointing out of the simple-complex dichotomy in the novel, I am particularly indebted for having suggested the framework of my chapter on *Pride and Prejudice*'. Mr Mudrick, one presumes, belongs to the so-called group of 'new critics'.

The success of Mr Mudrick's undertaking depends on the clarity with which he defines his terms and the subtlety of his commentary on the text of the novels themselves. 'Irony' and 'satire' are vague words. Lady Middleton fancied Elinor and Marianne satirical 'because they were fond of reading: perhaps without exactly knowing what it was to be satirical . . . it was censure in common use and easily given'. Critics sometimes become concerned in a similar manner with such terms as 'irony' or 'ambiguity'. Mr Mudrick points out that irony resembles social conventions since it allows the writer and the characters to remain detached from the feelings of others and themselves (p. 93). Yet irony, surely, need not involve lack of emotion. In his essay on the irony of Swift, Dr Leavis (who, compared with the 'new critics' may perhaps fittingly be described, in Jamesian phrase, as 'dear old') shows irony used to convey extremely violent feelings. Jane

Austen's use of irony is different from Swift's: it is hardly true to say of her writings that 'sympathy is irrelevant to irony' (p. 2). It is certainly not true that there is no irony at all in *Mansfield Park* (p. 178).

Jane Austen would, no doubt, be ironically amused at some of the things that Mr Mudrick says about the novels and herself. The description of the writer of *Pride and Prejudice* 'routed by the sexual question she has raised, concealed behind a bank of bourgeois morality', the picture of Mary Crawford 'leering feverishly from her doorway', and the almost Dantesque account of the end of *Mansfield Park* ('the process leaves Fanny and Edmund stripped of feeling and purpose, naked in the cold wind of casuistry. The larger misfortune is that *Mansfield Park* and, for the time being, Jane Austen herself, are there beside them' p. 180), are not merely inappropriate, but could not have been written if Mr Mudrick's ironic sense of the incongruous had been more alert. One recalls Jane Austen's criticism of the novels of her nieces: 'Devereux Forrester being ruined by his vanity is very good: but I wish you would not let him plunge into "a vortex of dissipation"'. I do not object to the thing, but I cannot bear the expression: it is such thorough novel slang; and so old that I dare say Adam met with it in the first novel that he opened.' The novelist who was offended at nothing so much as the absurdity of not being able to pronounce the word 'shift' had a morality that was enlightened, even if it was bourgeois. She would probably have been offended less at the sentiments of Mr Mudrick than at the 'thorough critical slang'.

Mr Mudrick occasionally provokes one to disagree with the substance of his remarks. The stress on Jane Austen's 'insularity' (p. 171), the statement that Emma 'does not know how to prize and respect tenderness' (p. 193), that she is moved 'to play God' (p. 194) the remark that Anne Elliot is 'Jane Austen's first

The Poetry of Shakespeare's Plays

by F. E. HALLIDAY

The sublimest quality of Shakespeare's genius is his poetry – the greatest poetry ever written in English, perhaps in any language. Shakespeare is so far above all others as dramatist and creator of character because he is so far above all others as poet. A proper aesthetic criticism of Shakespeare's plays must therefore begin with an examination of the poetry – a matter too much neglected in most modern appreciations.

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Mr. Halliday's two reference books, *Shakespeare and His Critics* (1949) and *A Shakespeare Companion* (1952) have already established themselves. This book is the third, and the most original of his trilogy.

192 pages. Demy 8vo. 15s. net

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heroine to take a detailed and disinterested pleasure in sensory impressions, in the beauty of autumn' (p. 223), oblige one to protest that justice is not being done to the delicacy and complexity of the writer and her work. Mr Mudrick has analysed the novels with painstaking care, and some of his observations are, as Joseph Warren Beach is quoted as saying, 'most acute and illuminating'. It is unfortunate that at certain key points his touch and insight are at fault, and he is guilty of a clumsiness both in thought and expression that Mr Forster and Virginia Woolf would have avoided, despite the limitation of their approach mentioned by him in the preface. There are advantages in not writing a thesis. A remark of Mr Mudrick's on *Mansfield Park* points the moral: 'to the thesis, everything else gives way'. Perhaps the forthcoming study (also by an American) on the structure of Jane Austen's novels will not give away quite so much.

FRANK BRADBROOK

DAVID DIRINGER: *The Hand Produced Book*. *Hutchinson*. £3 net.

This is the second volume of Dr. Diringer's great trilogy. The first volume, *The Alphabet*, which appeared in 1948, has been twice reprinted, and a third volume, *Illumination and Binding*, is in preparation. The complete series will be an indispensable tool of reference in any learned library. Dr Diringer's knowledge of the literature of his subject is vast and he possesses in the highest degree the gift of summarizing and reducing to its essentials up-to-date information which is widely scattered over books and journals in half a dozen languages. The result is a masterly synthesis, which systematically unfolds the history of book production from the clay tablet to the vellum codex; and this book is, so far as my experience goes, the only one which gives the diverse developments of the Orient and the Americas space in the total world-picture proportionate to their significance. On issues which are still matters of controversy, in particular the Dead Sea Scrolls, Dr Diringer is scrupulously fair and objective; and though he makes known his own view of the early date of the scrolls, he cites also the opinions of those who would assign them to a period well inside the Christian era.

On the production side it is necessary to voice certain reservations. A work of reference of over 600 pages requires all the aids to easy use which ingenuity can devise. Page-headings would have been helpful and the want of a list of the numerous and admirably chosen illustrations is a surprising *lacuna*.

A. N. L. MUNBY

MAURICE CRANSTON: *Freedom. A New Analysis*. *Longmans*, 12s. 6d. net.

Mr Cranston's new analysis of Freedom comprises three separate topics: The Meaning of Political Freedom; The Ambiguity of Liberalism; and The Freedom of the Will. In Part I there is a discussion of a general kind about descriptive and emotive meaning, the results of which are then applied to the word 'Freedom'. Mr Cranston sometimes writes as though we *ought* to attach only one sense to 'Freedom', although he elsewhere admits that such regimentation is artificial and may even be sinister. The best of this discussion is the account of 'positive' freedom — the freedom to do the right thing — and of 'compulsory freedom'. In Part II we have a long and interesting comparison between the political views called liberal at different times in England, France, Germany and America. Parts I and II are connected, but the association of these with Part III is not at all close.

Is there a *genuine* problem of the Freedom of the Will? In Part III Mr Cranston considers and rejects the views of those who hold that it is a bogus problem; he then considers the views of some who hold that it is a genuine problem and rejects the solutions they offer. Then he goes on to make suggestions of his own. He believes (not without doubts) that some of our choices and decisions must be 'free': his argument is as follows.

The freedom of the will has nothing to do with the freedom of our actions from external constraints; it has to do with the freedom of our choices and decisions. If a choice is free, then it was *avoidable*. But if it was avoidable, then it must have been unpredictable in principle. Mr Cranston often writes as though 'free' really means unpredictable in principle: he says that 'the freedom of the will' is a misleading name for a real problem which is not about the will and not about freedom but about the predictability of human choices and decisions. But I suspect that he really takes 'unpredictability in principle' as the outward empirical sign of freedom: for he also insists that a free choice has no causes — it has motives and reasons but no causes. Of course 'unpredictability in principle' is not the same thing as 'unpredictability in fact' and strictly speaking it is only the latter which is an empirical notion. Evidently he asks us to take *de facto* unpredictability (under certain conditions no doubt) as a sign of unpredictability in principle: and this (he holds) is the way in which we distinguish between voluntary and involuntary choices.

Mr Cranston is an able critic and can discuss a question in an intelligent way. He does not go all the way with those who profess the new analytical methods in philosophy. He is very much concerned to say that the problem of the freedom of the will is a real problem and not a bogus one. What exactly does this amount to? Some of the writers who are alleged to have held that the problem is bogus merely put forward the view that freedom is after all compatible with determinism; others have held that the problem is real enough but that it arises out of the language we use. I think Mr Cranston would have made further progress had he carried his linguistic analysis further. He writes:

We ordinarily think of our choices and decisions as having reasons, as following upon deliberation, as based on considerations. . . . Considerations

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of this kind result in our decisions, but considerations do not stand to decisions as causes to effects. (p. 127).

This itself cries out for examination. The traditional Free Will theory has to do with actions of which we say: *He did it deliberately. He had no choice. He never even tried. He need not have done it. He did it out of spite. He thought it would turn out very differently.* And all these judgments need the most careful examination. Something would come of this examination: indeed something has already come of it.

Mr Cranston makes a liberal use of the great philosophers, and of other philosophers, Kant and Joad, Bergson and Eddington appearing side by side. In some cases he is not ashamed to rely upon secondary sources. He writes in a lively popular manner and as a general rule he is explicit rather than suggestive. There are, however, points of great interest in the book: I should like to mention his criticism of Locke's doctrine that Freedom is 'a Power' (p. 26); his comment on the relation between the restraints imposed by the State and the restraints imposed by public opinion (p. 79); and his *aperçu* about indeterminacy in the political sciences (p. 166, etc.).

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